MAN'S DUAL NATURE IN ISLAM—*FIṬRAH* AND *NAFS*—BUILDING A MISSIONAL METHODOLOGY

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of

The Roy Fish School of Evangelism and Missions

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

---

by

Justin Truesdell Hiester

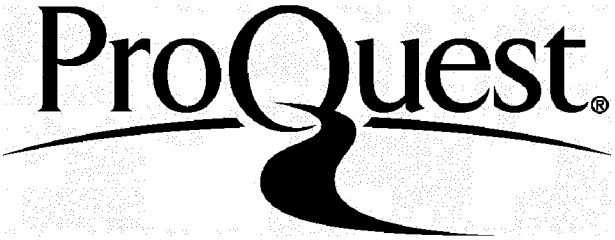
August 11, 2016

ProQuest Number: 10390419

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10390419

Published by ProQuest LLC(2017). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.
This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Copyright © 2016 by Justin T. Hiester

All rights reserved. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

APPROVAL SHEET

MAN'S DUAL NATURE IN ISLAM—*FIṬRAH* AND *NAFS*—
BUILDING A MISSIONAL METHODOLOGY

Justin T. Hiester

Dr. Keith Eitel, Dean of the Roy Fish School of Evangelism and Missions, Professor of Missions and Director of the World Missions Center

Dr. John David Massey, Associate Professor of Missions

Dr. Tony Maalouf, Professor of World Christianity/NAME Studies and Director of the Islamic Studies Program

Dr. Dean Sieberhagen, Assistant Professor of Missions

Date August 18, 2016

To my beautiful wife Cynthia,

the Lord used your selfless love and encouragement

to help me finish this project.

ABSTRACT

MAN'S DUAL NATURE IN ISLAM—*FIṬRAH* AND *NAFS*—
BUILDING A MISSIONAL METHODOLOGY

Islam's presiding stance on human nature states that man is solely good. This dissertation reveals from Islamic sources, however, that human nature is actually dual. The Qur'an not only attests that *fiṭrah's* innate good compels man to believe in Allah, but also to a Commanding Soul which incites him to perpetrate evil.

This research offering fresh insight into man's nature in Islam advances the Gospel in two ways. First, this dissertation's conclusion provides Muslims with the opportunity to learn from their own Islamic texts about human nature's sinful side. Second, this research regarding man's dual nature in Islam liberates Muslim-Christian dialogue by enabling the construction of a missional methodology which aims to show Muslims their dire need for Christ's salvation. More specifically, this missiological process produces six innovative biblical principles equipping Christians to better communicate about man's sinful nature within a Muslim's religious mindset.

Chapter 1 presents the dissertation's thesis along with a broad overview of each chapter.

Chapter 2 establishes that *fiṭrah's* innate goodness resides inside of man's disposition. This chapter comprises Islamic sources defining *fiṭrah's* meaning from etymology, the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, and prominent Muslim scholars' works.

Chapter 3 examines the qur'anic meaning of *nafs*, primarily focusing on the Commanding Soul's innate evil. This chapter comprises Islamic sources defining the Commanding Soul's meaning from etymology, the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, and prominent Muslim scholars' works.

Chapter 4 argues that the Islamic nature of man is dual by critiquing a respected book about *fiṭrah* from a distinguished twentieth century Islamic scholar named Mohamed Mohamed. Mohamed Mohamed's work teaches that man's nature is purely good due to *fiṭrah*, contending that it represents universal Islam.

Chapter 5 provides excerpts portraying Christians' missiological dilemma as they attempt to explain man's sinful nature to Muslims. This missiological dilemma illustrates Muslims outright rejecting Christ's salvation on the basis that human nature is solely good due to *fiṭrah*. Fortunately, Chapter 3's research regarding the Commanding Soul's evil provides a missiological solution that helps build a new missional methodology. This missiological process seeks to help Christians share about mankind's sinfulness within a Muslim's qur'anic mindset.

Justin T. Hiester, Ph.D.
Advisor: John David Massey, Ph.D.
Roy Fish School of Evangelism and Missions
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC WORDS x

PREFACE xi

Chapter

1. MAN'S DUAL NATURE IN ISLAM—*FIṬRAH* AND *NAFS*—BUILDING A MISSIONAL METHODOLOGY 1

Introduction 1

Statement of the Problem 3

Chapter 2: "The Nature of *Fiṭrah*" 3

Chapter 3: "The Nature of *Nafs*" 8

Chapter 4: "Contesting Mohamed's Positive View" 14

Chapter 5: "Building a Missional Methodology" 19

Conclusion 23

2. THE NATURE OF *FIṬRAH* 24

Defining *Fiṭrah* from Etymology 24

Pre-Arabic Meaning of *Fiṭrah* 25

Arabic Usage 27

Defining *Fiṭrah* from the Qur'an 30

Verb-Form I: Active Participle 30

Verb Form I 35

Verb-Form I—*Faṭara* & Noun—*Fiṭrah* 40

Chapter Page

Defining *Fiṭrah* from the *Ḥadīth*. 54

Part I: "No child . . ." 56

Part II: ". . . is born except on Al-Fitra . . ." 56

Part III: ". . . and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian . . ." 58

Part IV: ". . . as an animal produces a perfect young animal; do you see any part of its body amputated?". 60

Defining Fiṭrah from Its Primary Writers over Islamic History 68

Abu Al-Ḥasan Al-Ash'arī (d. 330 AH) 68

Abu Ḥāmid Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī (d. 505 AH/1111) 81

Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328) 93

Conclusion 110

3. THE NATURE OF *NAFS* 111

Defining *Nafs* from the Qur'an. 111

The Soul's Dual Capacity 112

The Soul's Three Modes 124

Defining Nafs from its Primary Writers over Islamic History 150

Ghazālī (d.1111) 151

Rāzī (d. 1209) 161

Ibn Qayyim (d. 1350) 170

Conclusion 179

4. CONTESTING MOHAMED'S POSITIVE VIEW 180

Emphasizing Man's Teleological Good. 181

Fiṭrah's Four Official Views. 181

Chapter Page

Refuting the Dual View. 188

Supporting the Positive View 199

De-Emphasizing Man's Ontological Evil. 212

References for the Soul Lacking. 213

Man's Evil Due to External Sources 221

Conclusion 232

5. BUILDING A MISSIONAL METHODOLOGY 234

The Missiological Dilemma 235

The Muslim's Description of the Adam and Eve Narrative 237

The Christian's Description of the Adam and Eve Narrative 241

The Missiological Need to Contextualize 244

A Missiological Solution 255

1st Step: Phenomenology 257

2nd Step: Ontology. 259

3rd Step: Missiology 278

Conclusion 299

6. CONCLUSION. 302

Chapter 2: "The Nature of *Fiṭrah*" 303

Chapter 3: "The Nature of *Nafs*" 305

Chapter 4: "Contesting Mohamed's Positive View" 307

Chapter 5: "Building a Missional Methodology" 309

Prospects for Further Study 311

BIBLIOGRAPHY 313

TRANSLITERATION OF ARABIC WORDS

The below transliteration key provides the template for spelling Arabic words within an English-letter system:

ا	=	Alif	=	a	ط	=	Ṭā`	=	ṭ
			=	ā (long vowel)	ظ	=	Ẓā`	=	ẓ
ب	=	Bā`	=	b	ع	=	`Ayn	=	` (inv. apost.)
ت	=	Tā`	=	t	غ	=	Ghayn	=	gh
ث	=	Thā`	=	th	ف	=	Fā`	=	f
ج	=	Jīm	=	j	ق	=	Qāf	=	q
ح	=	Ḥā`	=	ḥ	ك	=	Kāf	=	k
خ	=	Khā`	=	kh	ل	=	Lām	=	l
د	=	Dāl	=	d	م	=	Mīm	=	m
ذ	=	Dhāl	=	dh	ن	=	Nūn	=	n
ر	=	Rā`	=	r	ه	=	Hā`	=	h
ز	=	Zāy	=	z	و	=	Wāw	=	w (consonantal)
س	=	Sīn	=	s				=	ū (long vowel)
ش	=	Shīn	=	sh	ى	=	Yā`	=	y (consonantal)
ص	=	Ṣād	=	ṣ				=	ī (long vowel)
ض	=	Ḍād	=	ḍ	ء	=	Hamzah	=	` (apostrophe)

Short vowels: ◌َ (fatḥah) = a
◌ِ (kasrah) = i
◌ُ (ḍammah) = u

PREFACE

Honoring others who have made this work a reality proves an easy task. Without question the Lord receives full credit for introducing me to the Arab people in the Middle East while I was serving in the United States Air Force. My love for Muslims and calling to show them Christ starts here, with God's sovereign initiative.

The way in which the Lord used, and is still using, Dr. Tony Ma'lūf in my life is unbelievable. Sixteen years ago Dr. Ma'lūf encouraged me to stay in Jordan and complete a Master of Divinity degree at Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary. More than five years ago he challenged me to get a Ph.D. Dr. Ma'lūf's godly counsel and example continues to change the course of my life and family.

I want to thank Dr. Patterson for providing a way for me to complete my doctoral work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. I must also recognize Dr. Samuel Shahid's expertise in Islamic Studies. His classroom instruction was invaluable. Finally, Dr. John Massey's impact upon my ministry due to his biblical and missiological knowledge cannot be overstated. His timely and wise academic advice as my Advisor has been the catalyst behind seeing this work to completion.

Justin T. Hiester
Fort Worth, Texas
April 2016

CHAPTER 1

MAN'S DUAL NATURE IN ISLAM—*FIṬRAH* AND *NAFS*— BUILDING A MISSIONAL METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Close to two billion Muslims live in the world today and this number rises steadily. Apart from Christ's immediate work in these Muslims' lives, approximately one-fifth of the world's population remains separated from God. This alarming statistic reminds Christians around the globe of their great responsibility to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with Muslims. As the Holy Spirit sends God's people out witnessing to Muslims about Christ's salvation, though, a significant theological disparity eventually surfaces. Sooner than later Christians realize from their Muslim-Christian dialogues that one central aspect of Islamic theology tends to emasculate their Gospel presentations: Islam's stance on the nature of man.

A critical truth undergirding Christianity's evangelistic message presumes that human nature is sinful.[1] This fundamental Gospel premise, however, is the Muslim's nemesis because Islamic theology teaches that man's nature is wholly good rather than intrinsically sinful. Thus, therein lies the theological impetus triggering non-stop disagreement and confusion between Christians' evangelistic encounters with Muslims

---

[1]A. J. Conyers, *A Basic Christian Theology* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 69-70.

ever since Islam's inception (AD 610). For example, when Muslims listen to Christians urging them to believe in Jesus on the basis that mankind is utterly sinful, Muslims are offended. For Christians, though, as they withstand Muslims denouncing their beliefs about man's sinful nature, asserting man's goodness instead, Christians quickly realize that Islamic theology annuls one of the Gospel's essential foundations.

This dissertation aims to help Muslims understand that their human nature is sinful so that they might perceive a greater need for Christ's salvation. In order to achieve this objective, the writer constructs a twofold plan. First of all, research from Islam's texts and prominent scholars about *fiṭrah* and *nafs* endeavors to disclose that man's nature in Islam is not solely good, but dual, i.e. good *and* evil. Although classical and modern Islamic scholars emphasize man's teleological goodness through *fiṭrah*, it is vital that Muslims comprehend that innate evil also dwells in the *nafs*, or soul. The second means by which the writer helps Muslims recognize their need for Christ's salvation requires teaching Christians how to better contextualize their Gospel presentations about man's sinful nature within an Islamic framework. In light of this, the writer conducts "missional theology" by applying this new Islamic *dual* nature stance within Hiebert's "missional methodology".[2] By completing Hiebert's missiological process the writer yields six innovative principles empowering Christians to contextualize Christianity's essential truth that man's nature is sinful.

---

[2]Paul G. Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 44-51.

Statement of the Problem

Islamic scholars erect a massive stumbling block for Muslims when they assert that human nature is solely good. This dissertation, consequently, seeks to expose the qur'anic truth that innate good and evil resides in man's nature. The writer sets forth to accomplish this objective by first demonstrating that Islamic sources acknowledge a dual nature of man. Furthermore, this dissertation uses its dual nature findings for the purpose of providing a solution to the missiological dilemma Christians confront as they gridlock with Muslims while communicating an essential Gospel truth: man' sinfulness.

Chapter 2: "The Nature of *Fiṭrah*"

Islam teaches that human nature is purely good. The writer initiates the quest to comprehend why Muslims believe this by studying its qur'anic genesis. Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 says:

> So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.

The Arabic word for "nature" in this verse is *fiṭrah*. The Qur'an births *fiṭrah's* Arabic usage which, according to Griffel, also confronts translators with the complex task of translating it into other languages due to its vast religious meaning.[3] From an etymological perspective, *fiṭrah's* Arabic root (ف – ط - ر) appears in the Qur'an twenty times. Other than *fiṭrah's* single occurrence in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, other noun forms such

---

[3]Frank Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī's Use of "Original Human Disposition" (Fiṭra) and Its Background in the Teachings of Al-Fārābī and Avicenna," *The Muslim World* 102, no. 1 (2012): 2.

as فُطْر, فاطر, فَطور, generally connote something being *started* or *opened* for the first time. For example, فَطور refers to a person's *first* meal, or breakfast.[4]

Fiṭrah's Form I root—فاطر—appears in the Qur'an six times as an active participle. The qur'anic text, in all instances, includes *fiṭrah's* active participle designating Allah as "the Creator of the heavens and the earth (فاطر السماوات والأرض)". Ibn Kathīr writes that Allah as فاطر creates all things on the earth and in heaven with a "nature" that spontaneously confesses God's existence.[5] The Form I verbal usage—فَطَرَ—further gives insight into *fiṭrah's* root-meaning. فَطَرَ occurs eight times, and similar to فاطر's meaning, connotes how Allah "creates". In this particular verbal form, however, seven times فَطَرَ refers to Allah creating man's life from non-existence.[6]

The single verse in the Qur'an containing *fiṭrah's* rare noun form is Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 (above). Surrounding this verse's context one reads Muḥammad urging unbelievers (مشركين) to believe in Allah, the one true God. Specifically, Muḥammad in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 challenges polytheists toward directing their lives in such a way that "inclines" them "to truth". The phrase "inclining to truth" in Arabic is حنيفاً and generally implies a person following the same religion as Abraham (Sūrat al-'Imrān: 67) who Allah identifies as a Muslim. God creates all people with *fiṭrah's* (فَطَرَ الناس عليها) essence,

---

[4]Muḥammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab* (Al-Qahirah, Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1981), 5:3432-435.

[5]Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Andalus, 1966), 4:482.

[6]Jalal Al-Din Bin Al-Mahalli and Jalal Al-Din Bin Bakr Al-Suyuti, *Al-Qur'an Al-Karim Wa Bi-Hamish Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 1st ed. (Syria-Lebanon: Dar al-Fajr al-Islami, 2002), 326.

which Jurjāni explains enjoins man to a divine nature that naturally favors the "right religion", [7] or *tawḥīd*.

The most critical *ḥadīth* shaping Islam's stance on man's nature, and which also prompts the prophet Muḥammad to reveal Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, the writer names the Core *ḥadīth*. In the Core *ḥadīth* the prophet Muḥammad announces that:

> . . . No child is born except on Al-Fitra (Islam) and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian, as an animal produces a perfect young animal; do you see any part of its body amputated . . .[8]

Islamic commentators agree that *fiṭrah's* meaning, like in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, denotes a human disposition that Allah infuses into every person which automatically inclines itself toward *tawḥīd*. What is unique about the Core *ḥadīth*, though, is Muḥammad attaching *fiṭrah's* substance explicitly to Islam; for barring any anti-Muslim influences (e.g. parental religious upbringing), each child's *fiṭrah* guides him towards the "right religion", or Islam. In addition, other than the Core *ḥadīth*, the prophet Muḥammad mentions *fiṭrah* numerous times. These certain *ḥadīths* disclose additional insight into fiṭrah 's divine substance in that they illustrate the prophet Muḥammad instructing his followers about certain outward behavior originating in man's *fiṭrah*. For example, Islam's prophet teaches that his *fiṭrah* leads him to choose drinking milk over wine.[9]

---

[7] Alī ibn Muḥammad Jurjānī, *Al-Ta'rifat*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥakīm Qāḍī, 1st ed. (Al-Qahirah-Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Misri; Dār al-Kitab al-Lubnani, 1991), 183.

[8] Muhammad ibn Ismail Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari: Being the Tradition of Saying and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions*, ed. Muhammad Matraji, trans. F. Amira Zrein Matraji, 1st ed. (New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 1995), 6:328-29, Surat al-Rum, #4775.

[9] Muhammad Isma'il Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari* (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Bayt al-Afkar al-Dawliyyah, 1998), 1099, #5576.

Perhaps what most influences Islam's doctrine which states human nature is purely good are the three classical theologians who develop *fiṭrah's* meaning in their personal writings: Ash'arī, Ghazālī, and Ibn Taymiyyah. Ash'arī's colossal work, *Maqālāt Al-Islamiyyīn Wa Ikhtilāf Al-Muṣallīn*, surveys *fiṭrah's* primitive concepts during Islamic history's earliest centuries of theological debate. Overall, Ash'arī's *Maqālāt* advances *fiṭrah's* concept by recording its theological bearing upon mainline Islamic sects' battles with the Mu'tazilites over issues such as: 1) Allah's determinism (قدر), i.e. does *fiṭrah* impact God predetermining man's works,[10] 2) divine knowledge, i.e. does *fiṭrah* or man's النظروالقياس cause man to know Allah,[11] and 3) man's fate at birth, i.e. does an infant go to *jannah* when he dies because of *fiṭrah*.[12]

Ghazālī's personal zeal to know truth compels him to study *fiṭrah*.[13] Ghazālī's determination to understand truth's origin within man leads him to the "noble intellect".[14] In fact, Ghazālī positions the human intellect's various degrees of knowledge inside of man's *fiṭrah*, ultimately allocating fiṭrah 's intellectual activity to the First Things (اوّليات).[15] *Fiṭrah's* main contribution to man's "noble intellect", in Ghazālī's mind,

---

[10]Abu al-Hasan Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat Al-Islamiyyin Wa Ikhtilaf Al-Musallin* (كتاب المقالات الاسلاميين واختلاف المصلين), ed. Muhammad Muhya Al-Din 'Abd Al-Hamid, 1st ed. (Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah, 1950), 1:315-16.

[11]Ibid., 1:118.

[12]Ibid., 1:164.

[13]Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Al-Ghazali: Deliverance from Error*, trans. R.J. McCarthy (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1980), 54-55.

[14]Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *The Book of Knowledge, Being a Translation with Notes of the Kitab Al-'ilm of Al-Ghazali's Ihya Ulum Al-Din*, trans. Nabih Amin Faris (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1962), 226-28.

[15]Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Mihakk Al-Nathar Fi Al-Mantiq* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar

consists in generating man's first ideas which occur instinctively and prior to acquired knowledge or the senses' influence upon the human thought process.

Without negating Ash'arī or Ghazālī's theological and philosophical works relating to *fiṭrah*, Ibn Taymiyyah's exposition of the Core *ḥadīth* advances *fiṭrah's* nature to a new level. Stemming from Ibn Taymiyyah's enthusiasm to squelch the Qadarites' freewill theology, Ibn Taymiyyah exegetes the Core *ḥadīth* in such a manner that inserts chronology.[16] Taking advantage of the Core *ḥadīth's* philosophy that external factors, such as non-Muslim parental upbringing, contaminate a child's *fiṭrah*, Ibn Taymiyyah reasons, then, that Allah's *qadar*, due to *fiṭrah*, obliges each infant's purity at childbirth. By expositing the Core *ḥadīth* in this way, Ibn Taymiyyah not only protects Allah's *qadar* but also empowers Muslims to control their eternal destiny through obeying divine revelation. Perhaps more importantly, Ibn Taymiyyah elevates *fiṭrah's* concept by teaching that its nature spurs man to love and obey God rather than merely lead people to the knowledge of him.[17]

Overall, this chapter's research attests that innate good dwells in man's nature through *fiṭrah*.

---

al-Nahdah al-Hadithah, 1966), 58.

[16]Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyah, *Dara' Ta'arud Al-'Aql Wa Al-Naql* (درع تعارض العقل والنقل), ed. Muhammad Rashaad Salim, 2 ed. (Saudi Arabia: Hajar, 1991), 8:362.

[17]Ibid., 8:449.

Chapter 3: "The Nature of *Nafs*"

The second chapter reveals that innate good dwells in man through *fiṭrah*. This third chapter, however, affirms another integral facet to the Islamic nature of man. Just as Allah creates man with *fiṭrah*, he also places a *nafs*, or soul, inside each person. The Qur'an teaches that God deliberately fashions into the *nafs* a capacity for committing both good and evil. This qur'anic truth complements the *nafs'* three modes which comprise both innate good and evil. Prominent Islamic scholars Ghazālī, Rāzī, and Ibn Qayyim validate the *nafs'* dual nature in their literary works.

Compared to *fiṭrah's* single occurrence in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, the Qur'an mentions the *nafs* numerous times. It is Allah who creates the *nafs* (Sūrat al-Nisā': 1) and for the divine purpose that humans fear and obey him.[18] Also, after a person dies the Qur'an instructs (Sūrat al-'Ankubūt: 57) that it is the *nafs* Allah holds responsible and judges for the good and evil it commits. A person's good and bad deeds, moreover, do not surprise God because the Qur'an informs (Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10) that Allah fashions this dual capacity into the *nafs'* nature. Meaning, Allah's will for man intentionally "proportions" into the human *nafs* the good and evil that he expects it to enact.[19]

The Qur'an overtly discloses the soul's innate good and evil nature through the *nafs'* three modes: the Tranquil Soul, the Blaming Soul, and the Commanding Soul. Sūrat al-Fajr: 27-30 is the single place where the Qur'an mentions the Tranquil Soul

---

[18]Fakhr al-Din Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000), 5:129.

[19]Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 5th ed. (Bayrut, Lubnan: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1996), 20:51.

(النفس المطمئنّة). The Tranquil Soul abides in those people who have "steadfast" faith in Allah, enjoying complete "satisfaction" in him.[20] Obtaining the Tranquil Soul's "rest" does not happen automatically, but rather it comes to man through considerable effort on his part, such as through constant prayer, ardent belief in Allah's oneness, and repeating his name. The Blaming Soul (النفس اللوّامة) differs from the Tranquil Soul in that it "blames" man for his ungodly behavior. The Qur'an mentions the Tranquil Soul once (Sūrat al-Qiyāmah: 2) and some Muslims disagree concerning whether it belongs to believers or unbelievers.[21] Regardless of whom the Blaming Soul resides, its mission within the *nafs* never ceases from rebuking man for his sins. The presence of the Commanding Soul (النفس الامّارة) in the Qur'an (Sūrat Yūsuf: 53) plainly illustrates innate evil subsisting in man's nature. Concerning the person who speaks in the Commanding Soul's verse, Muslim commentators are unsure: some allege that it is Joseph, while others, Pharaoh's wife. All of them, however, unanimously indict the Commanding Soul for inciting him or her to perpetrate reprehensible acts;[22] and just as Sūrat Yūsuf: 53 states in its second half, if it were not for the Lord's mercy obstructing the Commanding Soul's evil tendencies, men would have little hope of escaping its destruction.

The Qur'an displays examples of the Commanding Soul's innate evil in five separate verses. In Sūrat Qāf: 16, Allah states that he "know[s] what dark suggestions his soul makes to him". Worthy of noting is that the same verb the Qur'an uses to depict

---

[20]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 16:160.

[21]Ibid., 15:190.

[22]Abī Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Ay Al-Qur'an* (جامع البيان عن تأويل اي القران) (Cairo: Matba'at Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa awladahu, 1954), 13:1.

Satan's evil temptations (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 17) also describes the Commanding Soul's "dark suggestions" in this first example. Commenting on Sūrat Qāf: 16, Ibn Kathīr writes that the human *nafs* suggests that man commits both good and evil deeds.[23] The second example is significant in that it designates the Commanding Soul as the *source* of man's evil desires. Specifically, Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 40 informs that only those who "restrain" their soul from "lower desires" achieve *jannah*. God despises the Commanding Soul's evil desires, Ṭabarī writes. As a result, man must continuously suppress it.[24] The qur'anic account of Joseph's brothers lying to their father about his youngest son's death (Sūrat Yūsuf: 17-18) provides the third example. In fact, the Arabic text clearly incriminates the brothers' souls for justifying their lie to Jacob about a wolf killing Joseph. This horrid deception by Joseph's brothers, Iṣfahānī states, is yet another product of the Commanding Soul's evil.[25] The same verb (سوّلت) referring to the brothers' souls' innate evil in the previous example also depicts Sāmirī's soul's innate evil. In Sūrat Ṭaha: 96, the text plainly depicts Sāmirī blaming his soul for "suggesting" that he throw a small amount of dirt into a cauldron which entices the Israelites into idol worship. Rāzī states that nothing else can warrant Sāmirī's idolatrous behavior other than him simply obeying the soul's lust.[26] Certainly the first qur'anic witness of the Commanding Soul's evil in human history occurs in the fifth example. Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30 teaches that

---

[23]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 6:319.

[24]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 30:48.

[25]Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Rāghib Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat Fi Gharib Al-Qur'an* (المفردات في غريب القران) (Al-Qahirah: Maktabat al-Anjlu al-Miṣriyyah, 1970), 1:30.

[26]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 11:97.

Cain's soul causes him to murder his brother Able (فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ). Many Muslim commentators advise that the phrase "فطوّعت له نفسه" indicts the Commanding Soul's proactive nature in causing human kind's first homicide, stating that Cain's soul did not merely cause Able's murder, but rather aggressively encourages it.[27]

Apart from the Qur'an and its commentators acknowledging the Commanding Soul's innate evil, Ghazālī, Rāzī, and Ibn Qayyim are a few of the outstanding authors who further expound upon the nature of man's soul. Ghazālī instructs that the sum-total of man's immaterial nature—the spirit (الروح), soul (النفس), and intellect (العقل)— exists within the heart (القلب). Man's spirit supports physical life and the human intellect allows him to know Allah. The *nafs'* three modes, however, Ghazālī writes, encapsulate man's essence:[28] the Tranquil Soul seeks Allah; the Blaming Soul wars against the lustful soul; and the Commanding Soul opposes the Tranquil Soul. From Ghazālī's kingdom allegory, one of his points advises the soul's need to seek the intellect's wisdom against his lust and anger. If this fails to happen, Ghazālī states that the Commanding Soul's evil unleashes its devastation.[29] Often Ghazālī's language appears to incriminate Satan for man's evil desires, but nonetheless, he acknowledges that evil internal stimuli proceed from man's "temperament".[30]

---

[27]Ibid., 6:164.

[28]Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2005), 876.

[29]Ibid., 881.

[30]Ibid., 903.

Rāzī is another Islamic scholar who writes about man's nature, and particularly about the soul. Rāzī purposes to exalt human beings above the other three classes of God's creation: the angels, animals, and plants. Unlike the latter three classes, God creates humans with wisdom (حكمة), an intellect (عقل), nature (طبيعة), and lust (شهوة).[31] For this reason, according to Rāzī, Allah selects human beings to rule the earth because their incorporeal composition forms a mix between evil and good. Therefore, only man's dual nature allows him to appreciate and yearn for truth.[32] Unlike Ghazālī, Rāzī categorizes man's corporate nature—the soul, intellect, spirit, and heart—as the Rational Soul. Concerning one of the Rational Soul's components, the *nafs*, Rāzī holds an unfavorable view, deeming it "reprehensible".[33] Furthermore, the Commanding Soul's evil desire (الهوى) within the Rational Soul's immaterial make-up aspires to destroy man. This is highly probable, Rāzī writes, for the Commanding Soul's هوى shares a greater advantage over man's intellect due to its many evil associates.[34]

One of Ibn Taymiyyah's most accomplished disciples who studies the soul is Ibn Qayyim. Ibn Qayyim stresses the *nafs*' oneness, countering those who confuse it with three distinct entities. Whenever the Commanding Soul's evil overruns the Tranquil Soul's "rest", a separate soul does not replace the former. Instead, Ibn Qayyim writes

---

[31]Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi, *Kitab Al-Nafs Wa Al-Ruh Wa Sharh Quwaha* (كتاب النفس والروح وشرح قواها), ed. Muhammad Hasan Al-Ma'sumi (Islamabad, Pakistan: Islamic Research Institute, 1968), 3-4.

[32]Ibid., 5.

[33]Ibid., 78.

[34]Ibid., 104-05.

that man's soul simply changes its attributes (صفات).[35] Concerning the Tranquil and the Commanding Soul's qualities, Ibn Qayyim's view is unambiguous: the former is good and the latter is evil.[36] Like Ghazālī, there are places where Ibn Qayyim's terminology characterizing Satan's relationship to the Commanding Soul's evil appears synonymous. Ibn Qayyim's language though, at the same time, shows a consistent pattern discriminating between the two evil agents. Satan, Ibn Qayyim states, is the Commanding Soul's "consort", or قرين;[37] and then he clearly delineates this evil alliance. Ibn Qayyim states that the Commanding Soul initially triggers a sinful "picture" (صورة) to appear within man's intellect for him to muse. Following the Commanding Soul's evil stimulus, Satan and his demons, who unceasingly "hunt" for these vile "pictures", ask its permission to enter into them. Depending on which soul-state reigns at that moment, i.e. Tranquil or Commanding, determines what follows. If the Commanding Soul proves dominant, however, it then permits Satan and his demons' entrance into man's evil desire where they partner in man's demise.[38]

Overall, this chapter's research attests that innate evil dwells in man's nature through the Commanding Soul.

---

[35]Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Ruh Fi Kalam 'Ala Arwah Al-Amwat Wa Al-Ahya' Bi-Al-Dala'il* (الروح في كلام على ارواح الاموات والاحياء بالدلائل), vol. 3rd (Al-Azhar, Misr: Maktabat Muhammad 'ali Sibi' wa Awladihi, 1967), 220.

[36]Ibid., 226.

[37]Ibid., 227.

[38]Ibid.

Chapter 4: "Contesting Mohamed's Positive View"

At the end of the twentieth century (1996) Mohamed Mohamed authors a book, *Fitrah: The Islamic Concept of Human Nature*, which Islamic and non-Islamic scholars alike consider as one of the leading works on *fiṭrah*.[39] The writer deems Mohamed's literary work exceptionally unique and worthy of critiquing for three reasons. First of all, as the title demonstrates, Mohamed's work takes the academic liberty claiming to represent universal Islam. Second of all, Mohamed argues that man's nature is indisputably good due to *fiṭrah* (what he names the Positive View), containing no innate evil. Thirdly, Mohamed, who is an Arabic professor, pens this book in English which naturally influences Western readers' understanding about man's nature. Thus, the writer in this fourth chapter aims to critique Mohamed's Positive View argumentation in order to prove that the nature of man in Islam is dual.

Mohamed argues in support of the Positive View by using a two-part defense: 1) he emphasizes man's teleological good, and 2) he de-emphasizes man's ontological evil. Mohamed's part-one argumentation supporting the Positive View begins by *negating* the Dual View which states that good *and* evil reside in man's nature. The Dual View teaches that man "deviates" from following *fiṭrah's* guidance when he submits to his evil desire (هواه).[40] Mohamed dismisses the Dual View with three arguments. His first argument questions its validity on account of Sayyid Quṭb (Egypt; d. 1966) and 'Alī

---

[39]John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), s.v. "Fitrah," by S. Kafrawi.

[40]Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones*, Reprint ed. (New Delhi, India: Islamic Book Service (P) Ltd., 2014), 91.

Sharī'tī's (Iran; d. 1977) "corrupt religious and politically charged" backgrounds, i.e. the Dual View's strongest adherents. Mohamed purports that Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'tī insert eisegesis into their exposition of certain qur'anic passages. For this reason, Mohamed believes that Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'tī view the "sounding clay" and Allah's "spirit" in Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29 as referring to innate good and evil dwelling in man.[41] Overall, the writer agrees with Mohamed's first argument.

Mohamed's second argument discounts the Dual View on two accounts. In the first account Mohamed presumes that Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'tī's good and evil perception of man's nature relegates Satan to that of Allah's "antithesis". Due to the fact that neither of these Dual View proponents actually state this point and because 'Alī Sharī'tī in one of his books writes that Satan is not Allah's antithetical equal,[42] the writer disagrees with Mohamed's first account. In the second account of this second argument, Mohamed calculates that because Sayyid Quṭb includes good and evil as part of man's nature, then in order to remain faithful to Islam's true nature Muslims logically must commit both honorable and wicked deeds.[43] Mohamed's reasoning proves unsound, however, because when the writer references Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 in Sayyid Quṭb's commentary, *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*, Sayyid Quṭb relates *fiṭrah's* holiness to Islam's true nature.[44] Furthermore, Sayyid Quṭb blames the Commanding Soul's evil desires for any

---

[41]Yasien Mohamed, *Fitrah: The Islamic Concept of Human Nature* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1996), 64.

[42]'Alī Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam: Lectures*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1979), 78.

[43]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 65.

[44]Sayyid Qutb, *Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an*, 32nd ed. (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Shuruq, 2003), 21:2767.

human deviation from Islam's path which *fiṭrah* naturally guides him to. As a result, the writer disagrees with Mohamed's second argument.

The third argument that Mohamed uses to attack the Dual View criticizes Sayyid Quṭb's rendering of Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10's two initial verbs—سوّى and ألهم. In *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān,* Sayyid Quṭb's commentary implies that Allah creates "latent" good and evil in man's soul.[45] The writer concedes that Mohamed's third argument is justified, but notes that Mohamed's rebuttal to Sayyid Quṭb's exposition of Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10 also confirms the soul's dual capacity.

After successfully negating portions of Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'tī's Dual View stance, Mohamed offers four different Islamic texts to defend the Positive View of *fiṭrah.* These scriptures reveal Mohamed's teleological approach to defining man's nature. In other words, Mohamed's emphasis on *fiṭrah's* religious purpose in man monopolizes his Islamic worldview from admitting ontological evil exists in man's nature due to the Commanding Soul. Evidence demonstrating Mohamed's teleological approach surfaces as Mohamed argues for the Positive View by citing the Core *ḥadīth,* Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172, and Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72. In these four passages' contexts, Mohamed links *fiṭrah's* meaning directly to Islam, the Islamic faith, *tawḥīd,* or to man's vicegerent role on earth; and with the exception of Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72, Mohamed's argumentation for the Positive View reflects the classical scholars' definitions of *fiṭrah* from Chapter 2. Thus, Mohamed's teleological emphasis in defining man's nature also represents classical Islam's.

---

[45]Ibid., 30:3917.

Furthermore, similar to Mohamed, other modern Muslim scholars, like Syed Al-Attas, Fazlur Rahman, and A. Ezzati further define man's nature with a teleological emphasis, i.e. they use some or all of Mohamed's four texts to explain why man's nature is solely good. Contrary to Mohamed, however, these modern scholars admit that man's nature includes ontological evil. For example, despite Attas writing that man's "essential" nature is purely good due to *fiṭrah*, he also admits that a "blameworthy nature", or innate evil tendency, exists inside of man.[46] Rahman likewise, when writing about man's *fiṭrah*, refers to it as man's "real nature", but then later states that human beings are a "blend of good and evil".[47] By differentiating between man's "essential" and "blameworthy" natures, then, these modern Muslim scholars disclose their teleological emphases. Meaning, they are unable to associate *fiṭrah's* goodness with anything less than Allah's divine purpose; but at the same, they cannot deny the nagging reality of the Commanding Soul's "blameworthy nature".

Besides arguing for the Positive View by emphasizing *fiṭrah's* teleological good, Mohamed also de-emphasizes the Commanding Soul's ontological evil. Mohamed does well to acknowledge the Commanding Soul's presence in man; however, unlike in his detailed exposition of *fiṭrah*, he does not overtly cite or even list the Commanding Soul's verse for the reader to become familiar. Moreover, the manner in which Mohamed writes about the Commanding Soul portrays the idea that Sūrat Yūsuf: 53 is

---

[46]Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*, 2nd ed. (Malaysia: ISTAC, 1993), 140.

[47]Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, 2nd ed. (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009), 127.

the single verse in the Qur'an which exemplifies its destructive behavior. As a result, Mohamed neglects to mention the Commanding Soul's five examples previously mentioned. Surprisingly, though, in the one instance where Mohamed does reference a source describing the Commanding Soul, he cites a secondary source testifying to the Commanding Soul's ontological evil,[48] and which affirms the writer's Commanding Soul's Chapter 3 findings.

Mohamed's final argument de-emphasizing man's ontological evil states that man's evil deeds result solely from external sources. Excluding the writer's Chapter 3 findings refuting this point, Mohamed's very own terminology admits innate evil reigns in man. For example, Mohamed writes that man must "gain control over this potential for wrong within himself".[49] Mohamed also calls the Commanding Soul a "negative tendency"[50] keeping man in "bondage"[51] unless he learns to "train" it. Furthermore, in another approach to prove that outward factors are the sole cause of man's evil deeds, Mohamed refers to Ghazālī's specific teaching about the soul's nature and interworking relationship. Unfortunately, though, Mohamed, instead of referencing Ghazālī directly, again uses secondary sources for evidence. Notwithstanding, the writer references Ghazālī's original teaching in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* on the soul's nature. Whereas Mohamed asserts that Ghazālī's information regarding the soul illustrates external factors

---

[48]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 103.

[49]Ibid., 101.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., 104.

causing man to commit evil deeds, the writer learns the opposite. In fact, Ghazālī's teaching informs that man's nature has "four flaws" (شوائب), and one of them he names "satanic".[52] Furthermore, Mohamed perceives that Ghazālī holds Satan responsible for the Commanding Soul's evil. This, however, is an incorrect understanding of Ghazālī's teaching, because when Ghazālī writes about Satan in this context, he uses symbolic language referring to the soul's "satanic" personality.[53]

Overall, this chapter's research attests that Mohamed's argumentation supporting the Positive View proves unsound. Although Mohamed's evidence emphasizing *fiṭrah's* teleological goodness is accurate, his de-emphasis of the Commanding Soul's ontological evil lacks thorough references and sound argumentation. For this reason, the writer states that man's nature in Islam is dual, containing innate good (*fiṭrah*) and evil (Commanding Soul).

Chapter 5: "Building a Missional Methodology"

The previous chapters provide evidence indicating that man's nature in Islam is not merely good, but also evil. In that Christians' Gospel presentations often stalemate because Muslims believe that they do not have a sinful nature, missiologists must not waver in building a new missional methodology that better equips Christians to communicate with Muslims about their soul's innate evil.

Christians who actively share the Gospel with Muslims are facing a missiological dilemma. As Christians inform Muslims that they are sinful, and therefore

---

[52]Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din.*

[53]Ibid., 885-86.

need Jesus' salvation, Islam's adherents frequently take serious offense; because from their Islamic perspective, Christ's redemption is simply unnecessary.[54] Hence, a typical Muslim's response to Christians attempting to communicate man's sinfulness reveals that he rejects this biblical truth for two reasons:[55] 1) Islam teaches that man's nature is wholly pure due to *fiṭrah*, and 2) Islam resolutely rejects Christianity's doctrine of inherited sin. Unfortunately, the missiological reality exposes that the average Christian applies minimal contextualization when speaking about mankind's sinfulness in his Gospel presentation with Muslims. Meaning, when Christians share their faith with Muslims they tend to belabor man's sinful state and then defend this truth by expositing the Adam and Eve narrative.[56] As a result, Muslim-Christian dialogue exasperates those involved because that which Muslims unequivocally reject about man's nature preoccupies Christians' Gospel presentations.

A major reason for this frustrating evangelistic impasse comes as the result of missiologists encouraging Christians to contextualize the Gospel,[57] but without equipping them with a pragmatic missional methodology directing them how. Miller's approach to communicating man's sinfulness with Muslims within their qur'anic mindset proves the most promising. Unlike the majority of Christian missiologists' works about Muslim evangelism and man's sinfulness, Miller stresses *fiṭrah's* goodness but then mentions the

---

[54]Isma'il Raji Al-Faruqi, *Islam and Other Faiths*, ed. Ataullah Siddiqui (United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 1998), 15.

[55]Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, Updated ed. (Harrisonburg, VA.: Herald Press, 2011), 45.

[56]Ibid., 133.

[57]William J. Saal, *Reaching Muslims for Christ* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1993), 151.

"dark side" of human nature: the Commanding Soul.[58] Miller further emphasizes how these two incorporeal Islamic ingredients residing inside of man prepare Muslims for a lifelong "moral struggle".[59] At the end of Miller's chapter focusing on "The Muslim View of Sin", he then offers some practical guidelines helping Christians contextualize their Gospel dialogue with Muslims. In one of Miller's points of application, he advises Christians to read Mark 7:21-22 with Muslims.[60] This passage, Miller writes, focuses on Jesus' teaching about the source of man's evil deeds: the heart. This biblical truth aligns itself with Ghazālī's teaching about the heart[61] and the Qur'an's Commanding Soul testimony. Therefore, Miller encourages Christians to discuss this passage with Muslims to help them understand their sinful nature. Nonetheless, Miller's information about the Commanding Soul and practical application lacks thoroughness, and thus, needs more development for the average Christian to use effectively.

The writer's research on *fiṭrah*, the Commanding Soul, and his critique of Mohamed, however, provides a missiological solution to the presiding missiological dilemma. This dissertation's research demonstrates that man's nature in Islam is dual, rather than solely good due to *fiṭrah*. Thus, by inserting this dual nature data into Hiebert's three-step missional methodology, the writer formulates a systematic plan that

---

[58]Roland E. Miller, *Muslims and the Gospel: Bridging the Gap: A Reflection on Christian Sharing* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press, 2005), 50.

[59]Ibid., 51.

[60]Ibid., 65.

[61]Ibid.

equips Christians to lead their Muslim friends to the crucial understanding that they have a sinful nature in need of Christ's redemption.

Hiebert's missional methodology comprises three steps: phenomenology, ontology, and missiology.[62] Phenomenology requires missiologists study a people's religious context. The writer's research demonstrating that man' nature in Islam includes both innate good and evil fulfills phenomenology's requirements. Hiebert's second step, ontology, investigates what systematic theology teaches about a missiologist's particular field of study.[63] In this case, the writer examines Christianity's main themes relating to human nature. The writer's research of systematic theology to complete this second step, ontology, instructs: 1) that God creates man in his good image; 2) that the many biblical terms referring to man's incorporeal essence (e.g. heart, soul, mind, bowels, flesh, spirit, etc.) corporately designate man's single nature; 3) that sin's essence is internal; and 4) that God considers mankind sinful, and thus guilty, due to Adam's sin. In the last step, missiology, the writer combines phenomenology and ontology's findings in order to formulate biblical principles that help Christians describe man's sinful nature within a Muslim's qur'anic mindset.[64] Missiology produces six biblical principles for Christians to follow; they are: 1) avoid discussion about the doctrine of inherited sin; 2) emphasize man's evil deeds subsequent to Adam's sin; 3) emphasize that man's evil deeds originate from evil desires; 4) emphasize man's internal struggle as he strives to obey God's Law;

---

[62]Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 47.

[63]Ibid., 48-49.

[64]Ibid., 50-51.

5) emphasize God giving man a new heart to cure his sinful condition; and 6) emphasize the noble purpose that God's image gives man on earth.

Overall, this chapter's research demonstrates that Muslim-Christian dialogue regarding man's nature is at an impasse. Unfortunately, despite missiologists stressing contextualization's importance in Christians' Gospel presentations with Muslims, minimal development takes place with regards to mankind's sinful nature. In order to solve this missiological dilemma, the writer builds an innovative missional methodology equipping Christians with six biblical principles to apply in their Gospel discourse with Muslims.

Conclusion

There are close to two billion Muslims residing in the world. The majority of these Muslims, because they do not perceive their sinfulness, fail to comprehend their need for Christ's salvation. Indeed, Islam instructs that human nature is solely good due to Allah creating mankind upon *fiṭrah*. In the Qur'an, however, Allah further states that innate evil dwells in man's disposition through the Commanding Soul. The writer concludes, then, that man's nature in Islam is dual: innately good and evil.

This dissertation aims to present an accurate account of man's nature in Islam so that Muslims will grasp the gravity of their innate evil tendencies by turning to Jesus for a new heart, or nature. As a result, the writer uses this dissertation's dual nature conclusion to build a missional methodology which equips Christians with six biblical principles helping them to better communicate within a Muslim's qur'anic mindset that human nature is sinful.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF *FIṬRAH*

Comprehending fiṭrah 's divine essence and spiritual role within man requires a multi-step process. Griffel states, "The Arabic word *fiṭra* carries such a range of meanings that it cannot be easily translated into English."[65] Methodically researching fiṭrah 's exact nature, therefore, is essential. This chapter arrives at its goal through using a narrow-to-broad approach. The first section examines fiṭrah 's etymological origins. The next section pinpoints fiṭrah 's qur'anic meaning by studying every verse that it and its derivatives occur in the Qur'an. Reviewing the many *ḥadīths* wherein the prophet Muḥammad speaks about fiṭrah provides yet another broader scope. Finally, this chapter's last section surveys one of the greatest factors aiding fiṭrah 's developing concept during early Islamic history—its writings by three renowned theologians.

Defining *Fiṭrah* from Etymology

Prior to entering the etymological meaning of *fiṭrah* in the Arabic language, Gobillot's findings concerning *fiṭrah's* origins in the Hebrew, Syriac, and Ethiopian languages are noteworthy. After reporting Gobillot's pre-Arabic findings about *fiṭrah*, the Arabic meanings follow.

---

[65]Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī's Use of "Original Human Disposition" (Fiṭra) and Its Background in the Teachings of Al-Fārābī and Avicenna," 2.

Pre-Arabic Meaning of *Fiṭrah*

Despite Griffel's conclusion that there is no evidence *fiṭrah* precedes the Qur'an in Arabic literature,[66] according to French scholar Gobillot, *fiṭrah* exists in earlier Hebrew, Syriac, and Ethiopian works.

The *fiṭrah* pre-Arabic root-equivalent in Hebrew, writes Gobillot, is *p-ṭ-r*; and in the Hebrew verb-form *paṭar* it means to "open, give opening, [and] to release."[67] In context, Gobillot highlights *paṭar's* specific meaning by citing two OT passages, e.g. Exod 13:2 and Num 3:12-14. In the former, the Lord commands Moses, "Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel . . ."[68] A literal translation of "the first offspring of every womb" can read "the firstborn, the one who first *opens up* [*paṭar*] the womb" (writer's translation and emphasis). Gobillot describes how verb-form *paṭar* in the OT distinctively relates to those firstborn among God's covenant community who "were enshrined as a sign of alliance to the Lord."[69] In the Arabic verb-form فاطر Gobillot's research finds fourth century AD Hebrew "borrowing" from the Aramaic. In this Hebrew form—فاطر— Gobillot states that its meaning refers to the unstained and holy unleavened bread left uneaten the night of Passover.[70]

---

[66]Ibid., 3.

[67]Geneviève Gobillot, *La Conception Originelle Ses Interpretations Et Fonctions Chez Les Penseurs Musulmans: La Fitra* (Le Caire, France: Institut Francais D'Archeologie Orientale, 2000), 7.

[68]The NASB version is used throughout this dissertation unless otherwise noted.

[69]Gobillot, *La Conception Originelle Ses Interpretations Et Fonctions Chez Les Penseurs Musulmans: La Fitra*, 8.

[70]Ibid.

The Syriac noun-form of *fiṭrah* is *faṭawarto*. It refers to "the mushroom, the cucumber, the fruit hardly hatched which appears by splitting the earth or pod, as well as the knots and the extra growths . . . seen on trees."[71] The Syriac sense of this word indicates something exiting for the first time or breaking out into some unique formation. Gobillot adds how verb-form *faṭīra* in Syriac Christian literature refers to that which is unfermented, unleavened, and to the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or the Passover, "which of course was celebrated during the Last Supper."[72]

The oldest evidence of *fiṭrah*, Gobillot writes, is found in the "classical" Ethiopian language. The corresponding Ethiopian word is *guéze* which means "to create." Gobillot dates the root of *guéze* as far back as third century CE locating its earliest usage among the *Aksoum* people. With regards to the primary meaning of *guéze* (the Ethiopian version of *fiṭrah*), Gobillot explains how the "Coptic church of Ethiopia" commonly uses it in their written liturgy and Scriptures. Gobillot cites numerous OT passages to help one grasp the meaning of *guéze* (Gen 6:7, Deut 4:32; Job 10:8; 35:10; Ps 123:17-18; Jer 14:14; Dan 2:9). For example, Elihu questions Job saying (Job 35:10), "But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker . . .' The form of *fiṭrah* in this verse is "Maker" and it conveys the general sense of *guéze* throughout the Ethiopian Scriptures which is to *create*. In the NT usage of *guéze* Gobillot writes, "Then, in certain contexts, it [*guéze*] was taken as equivalent of [the] Greek [word] *phusīs* (nature), as for instance in

---

[71]All translations in this dissertation from French or Arabic sources are mine unless otherwise noted.

[72]Gobillot, *La Conception Originelle Ses Interpretations Et Fonctions Chez Les Penseurs Musulmans: La Fitra*, 8.

the translation of Paul's epistles" (1 Cor 11:14; "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair . . ."). Gobillot also emphasizes that *guéze* at times in the NT refers to the nature of Christ.[73]

Pre-Arabic analysis. The information acquired from Gobillot's research on fiṭrah is valuable. Unlike the subsequent Arabic meanings of *fiṭrah* from seventh century AD and onward (which will be discussed after this section), only Gobillot's work precedes *fiṭrah's* Arabic usage. The general sense of *fiṭrah's* Hebrew verb-form indicates the first opening of a mother's womb and also, unleavened bread. Both Hebrew meanings comprise spiritual significance with God's people, albeit indicating a special covenantal relationship with God, a child being born, or something pure and holy. *Fiṭrah's* Syriac equivalent conveys similar meanings. *Faṭawarto* overall refers to mushrooms and cucumbers or to fruit initially budding from the earth. The Syriac word for *fiṭrah* (*faṭīra*), like in Hebrew, also has a spiritual essence referring to unleavened bread, especially Christ (who is without sin). The oldest understanding of *fiṭrah* comes from the Ethiopian equivalent *guéze*. Mostly, *guéze* means to *create* but in the Ethiopian Coptic NT Scriptures it at times signifies the inner nature of something, even to Christ's.

Arabic Usage

This sub-section studies fiṭrah without referencing qur'anic or traditional material through defining fiṭrah 's different verb forms, verbal-nouns, and nouns.

---

[73]Ibid., 8-9.

The Semitic three-letter root of *fiṭrah* is ف – ط - ر.[74] Out of the possible ten derived verb stems for ف – ط - ر, five[75] are active in the Arabic language: Form I (فعل), Form II (فعّل), Form IV (أفعل), Form V (تفعّل), and Form VII (انفعل).[76] The meanings of these verb forms, verbal nouns, and nouns are:[77]

- Form I—فطر: to make (خلق), to create (أوجد), to innovate (أبدع), to crack open (شقّ), to start something from the beginning (ابتدأ), to knead dough, to break a fast (أفطر)
  - Active participle—فاطر: making, creating, opening
  - Infinitive—فَطْر: cracking, splitting, milking an animal, or a crack (pl. فطور)
  - Infinitive—فِطْر: breaking a fast (by opening his mouth: فتح فاهُ)
- Form II—فطّر: splitting something into pieces (شقّ), breaking someone's fast by feeding him a meal
  - Active participle—تفطير: breaking someone's fast (أفطر الصائم)
- Form IV—أفطر: to break a fast, to break someone's fast
  - Active Participle—مفطر: the one breaking a fast (pl. مفاطر)
  - Infinitive—إفطار: breaking a fast, the first meal at sunset after fasting during Ramaḍān
- Form V—تفطّر: to be split or cracked open (تشقّق; انشقّ)
- Form VII—انفطر: (equal to Form V)
  - Active participle—منفطر: being opened up, torn apart
  - Infinitive—إنفطار: being opened up, torn apart
- Noun—فُطْر: a small amount of milk after milking an animal, mushrooms, fungi, the initial budding of fruit
- Noun—فَطْر: a crack, rupture (pl. فُطور)
- Noun—فطرة: natural disposition, nature, innate character (جِبِلّة, خِلْقة)
- Noun—فاطر: fresh milk from milking (opening an animal's udders), unleavened bread
- Noun—فَطور: the morning meal, i.e. breakfast

---

[74]Ahmad Bin Faris Bin Zakariyya, *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah* (معجم مقاييس اللغة), vol. 4 (Egypt: Matba'at Mustaf al-Babi al-Halabi, 1971), 510.

[75]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 5:3432.

[76]Hans Wehr and J. Milton Cowan, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 3d [rev.] ed. (Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, 1971), XIII, 719.

[77]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 5:3432-435.

Arabic analysis. *Fiṭrah's* above etymological information produces a clearer picture about its linguistic meaning. Looking at Form I and proceeding to Form VII (including the four nouns below), all purvey *fiṭrah's* common theme: the motif whereby something is created or opened up for the first time. In Form I things are innovated, created, made, and kneaded into something new. Part of Form II and all of IV entails obliging one to open his mouth to break a fast. Forms V and VII are reflexive of the aforementioned forms giving the meaning of cracked or opened up. فُطْر describes a fruit's initial sprouting from its pod or the ground. فطور refers to the first meal of the day (when people open their mouths for the first time). فَطْر means "crack" (pl. فُطور); and the two nouns (فطرة, فاطر) possibly hint at a deeper facet of ف – ط - ر's meaning.

Studying *fiṭrah's* Arabic root up until this point mostly links its meaning to first-time exterior qualities, i.e. an object made, opened up, or produced. فاطر and *fiṭrah*, however, introduce an *interior* connotation to ف – ط - ر which Gobillot's research confirms. The Hebrew form *faṭīr* and Syriac form *faṭira* both harmonize with فاطر's Arabic meaning: something unfermented and unleavened. Notice this slant on ف – ط - ر's meaning is *interior*, relating to a composition of ingredients. Gobillot's work then narrows فطير's Christian significance to the unleavened bread the Israelites ate celebrating Passover. Moreover, the Syriac's NT Coptic equivalent of the Arabic's فطير reveals more of ف – ط - ر's interior essence which Gobillot's work explains points to the nature of something, even the unblemished nature of Christ.

The previous ف – ط - ر exterior meanings along with the interior فاطر connotations all seem to culminate within the rare ف – ط - ر noun-form *fiṭrah*. Ibn Manẓūr's *Lisān al-'Arab* defines *fiṭrah* as describing something or someone's "natural

disposition, nature, [or] innate character." This definition helps draw new insight to Gobillot's observation about the Israelites' firstborn (*paṭar*) and how they "were enshrined as a sign of alliance to the Lord." This consecrated covenant God shared with those firstborn among his people could also intimate a spiritual character present within their created composition.

Defining *Fiṭrah* from the Qur'an

All roots of ر - ط – ف in the Qur'an occur twenty times within nineteen verses. Of these twenty occurrences, ر - ط – ف falls into four verb and two noun-form categories: Verb-Form I: Active Participle—فاطر (six times); Verb-Form I—فطر (eight times); Verb-Form V & VII—تفطّر & انفطر (four times); Noun: Plural—فُطور (once); and Noun—فطرة (once). The following section breaks down the meaning of each Verb-Form I: Active Participle— فاطر and Verb-Form I— فطر.[78] In Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 two forms of the Arabic root ر – ط – ف occur: Verb-Form I—فطر, and the Noun— فطرة. This sole verse forms the pivotal *qur'anic* foundation for Islam's stance on man's divine and pure nature;[79] and therefore deserves extensive study and analysis.

Verb-Form I: Active Participle

• سورة الأنعام: ١٤
قُلْ أَغَيْرَ ٱللَّهِ أَتَّخِذُ وَلِيًّا **فَاطِرِ** ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُ وَلَا يُطْعَمُ ۗ قُلْ إِنِّىٓ أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ ۖ وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ

---

[78]Together, Verb Forms V & VII occur in the Qur'an only four times (Sūrat Miriam: 90; Sūrat al-Shūrá: 5; Sūrat al-Muzzammil: 18; Sūrat al-Infiṭār: 1) and in all cases simply refer to the heavens being "torn," "cleft," or "rent" open. The plural form of فطر, فطور, occurs once (Sūrat al-Mulk: 3) and means "rifts" or "cracks."

[79]Esposito, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, 2:Fitrah.

• Sūrat al-An'ām: 14[80]

Say: "Shall I take for my protector any other than Allah, the **Maker** of the heavens and the earth? And He is that feedeth but is not fed." Say: "Nay! but I am commanded to be the first of those who bow to Allah (in Islam), and be not thou of the company of those who join gods with Allah."

Starting with verse one in this late Meccan *sūrah*, Allah's creative power is exalted (6:1—"Praise be to Allah, Who created (خلق) the heavens and the earth...").[81] The phrase "Maker of the heavens and the earth" in Sūrat al-An'ām: 14 maintains the exact same Arabic wording as verse one does with the exception of the active participle فاطر, "Maker," replacing خلق (he created). As pagan Arabs tempt Muḥammad with material possessions, Qurṭubī explains how Islam's prophet becomes indignant. Muḥammad responds to them by asking the مشركين (polytheists) a simple question: "Shall I take for my protector any other than Allah, the Maker of the heavens and the earth..." The "Maker" *is* the Creator (الخالق) who feeds and is not fed; and is therefore, worthy of bowing down to in worship.[82] Ṭabarī confirms Qurṭubī's commentary and adds that فاطر is an adjective describing Allah which means he is the "innovator (مبتدع), starter (مبتدأ), [and] creator (خالق)" of the heavens and earth.[83]

• سورة يوسف: ١٠١

رَبِّ قَدْ ءَاتَيْتَنِى مِنَ ٱلْمُلْكِ وَعَلَّمْتَنِى مِن تَأْوِيلِ ٱلْأَحَادِيثِ ۚ فَاطِرَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ أَنتَ وَلِيِّۦ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ ۖ تَوَفَّنِى مُسْلِمًا وَأَلْحِقْنِى بِٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ

• Sūrat Yūsuf:101

"O my Lord! Thou hast indeed bestowed on me some power, and taught me something of the interpretation of dreams and events— O Thou **Creator** of the heavens and the earth! Thou art my Protector in this world

---

[80]Abdullah Yūsuf 'Ali's English translation of the Qur'an is used throughout this dissertation unless otherwise noted.

[81]Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 11th ed. (Beltsville, MD: Amana Pub., 2008), 293-94.

[82]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 6:255-56.

[83]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 7:158.

and in the Hereafter Take thou my soul (at death) as one submitting to Thy Will (as a Muslim), and unite me with the righteous."

Sūrat Yūsuf recites an altered story of the biblical figure Joseph, the second to youngest of Jacob's twelve sons who sell him into slavery.[84] Prior to this verse Joseph has reunited with his father (Sūrat Yūsuf: 99) and then begins to recall the Lord's (الربّ) goodness. Through all of the hardship Joseph endures in Egypt, Allah gives him "power" (الملك) and "teaches" him (علّمتني) how to interpret dreams (الاحاديث). Joseph, remembering the Lord's mercy, addresses him with the highest praise as "Creator of the heavens and the earth . . ." (فاطر السماوات ولارض). Joseph concludes the verse by declaring submission to the Lord, his Protector (وليّ) in this life and the "Hereafter." Jalalayn says that فاطر means خالق, or Creator.[85] Ṭabarī agrees with Jalalayn adding another synonym for فاطر (Creator): بارئ.[86]

• سورة إبراهيم: ١٠
قَالَتْ رُسُلُهُمْ أَفِي ٱللَّهِ شَكٌّ **فَاطِرِ** ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ يَدْعُوكُمْ لِيَغْفِرَ لَكُم مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُؤَخِّرَكُمْ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ قَالُوٓا۟ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا تُرِيدُونَ أَن تَصُدُّونَا عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ ءَابَآؤُنَا فَأْتُونَا بِسُلْطَـٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ

• Sūrat Ibrāhīm: 10
Their messengers said: "Is there a doubt about Allah, the **Creator** of the heavens and the earth? It is He Who invites you, in order that He may forgive you your sins and give you respite for a term appointed!" They said: "Ah! ye are no more than human like ourselves! Ye wish to turn us away from the (gods) our fathers used to worship: then bring us some clear authority."

Allah prior to this verse reminds the Meccan people how in the past he sent messengers (رسل; موسى, نوح, عاد, ثمود) declaring truth to different generations of people.[87] Most of them doubted their message. The prophets attempted to persuade them by

---

[84]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 544.

[85]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 247.

[86]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 13:73.

[87]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 602.

saying, "Is there a doubt about Allah, the Creator of the heavens and the earth?" ف – ط - ر's active participle, فاطر, is translated by Yusuf 'Ali as Creator. Likewise, Jalalayn,[88] Qurṭubī,[89] and Ṭabarī[90] define فاطر to mean Creator (خالق). Ibn Kathīr adds, "Indeed the nature (الفطر) testifies to his [الله] existence (بوجوده), and it (الفطر) is fashioned in man to acknowledge him (مجبولة على الإقرار به). Indeed, confessing him [الله] is necessary within the sound nature (الفطر السليمة)."[91]

• سورة فاطر: ١
ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ **فَاطِرِ** ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ جَاعِلِ ٱلْمَلَـٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا أُو۟لِىٓ أَجْنِحَةٍ مَّثْنَىٰ وَثُلَـٰثَ وَرُبَـٰعَ ۚ يَزِيدُ فِى ٱلْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

• Sūrat Fāṭir: 1
Praise be to Allah **Who created** (out of nothing) the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels Messengers with wings— two, or three, or four (Pairs): He adds to Creation as He pleases: for Allah has power over all things.

The name of this *sūrah* is فاطر. Yusuf 'Ali in the Introduction writes, "This Sūrah deals with the mystery of Creation and its maintenance."[92] الفاطر, or the Creator, and his creative power *are* the chapter's subjects. Logically, then, Muḥammad opens its recitation with "Praise be to Allah Who created the heavens and the earth . . ." The remainder of this revelation affirms Allah's creation of the angels and his "power over all things." Yusuf 'Ali translates the active participle فاطر as "Who created", and writes that "the word *faṭara* here . . . means the creation of primeval matter . . ."[93]

---

[88]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 256.

[89]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 9:227.

[90]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 13:190.

[91]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 4:482.

[92]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 1100.

[93]Ibid., 1101.

• سورة الزمر: ٤٦
قُلِ ٱللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ عَٰلِمَ ٱلْغَيْبِ وَٱلشَّهَٰدَةِ أَنتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِى مَا كَانُوا۟ فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

• Sūrat al-Zumar: 46
Say: "O Allah! **Creator** of the heavens and the earth! Knower of all that is hidden and open! It is Thou that wilt judge between Thy Servants in those matters about which they have differed."

This *sūrah* falls into the Meccan period comprising a strong creation theme lifting up Allah's power to "plan . . . create . . . and sustain" the world.[94] Within the context of the dreadful day when all souls are judged for their good and bad deeds accomplished on earth, Muḥammad pleads for Allah to judge rightly between his servants (عبادك). Islam's prophet begins his plea by addressing Allah as "Creator of the heavens and the earth" (فاطر السماوات). Ṭabarī also translates فاطر as Creator (خالق).[95]

• سورة الشورة: ١١
فَاطِرُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ جَعَلَ لَكُم مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَٰجًا وَمِنَ ٱلْأَنْعَٰمِ أَزْوَٰجًا ۖ يَذْرَؤُكُمْ فِيهِ ۚ لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِۦ شَىْءٌ ۖ وَهُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ

• Sūrat al-Shūrah: 11
(He is) the **Creator** of the heavens and the earth: He has made for you pairs from among yourselves, and pairs among cattle: by this means does He multiply you: there is nothing whatever like unto Him, and He is the One that hears and sees (all things).

Recited within a context comparing God's majesty and man's waywardness, Muḥammad accentuates Allah as فاطر, the Creator.[96] Qurṭubī defines فاطر as المبدع and الخالق (both generally mean Creator) and then explains what الفاطر does in this verse: he gives order to the human race by creating Adam, Eve, and the cattle to populate the

---

[94]Ibid., 1179.

[95]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 14:11.

[96]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 1245.

earth.[97] As a result of God's creative order, because he is the Creator (الفاطر), "There is nothing whatever like unto Him . . ." Ṭabarī's comments mirror Qurṭubī's.[98]

Analysis. The active participle's ف – ط - ر root chiefly designates Allah as "the Creator" (الفاطر) of the heavens and the earth. الفاطر has power over all things. There is nothing like him. Allah gives humans, animals, and angels life; but himself is "not fed" because he is self-sufficient. Furthermore, Ibn Kathīr explains that Allah infuses all his creation with a "sound nature" (الفطر السليمة). This sound nature in human beings naturally prompts man to acknowledge him as the one true God. Moreover, Yusuf 'Ali connects فاطر to "primeval matter." Not only does فاطر *'s* sound nature prompt creation to confess him, but it also forms each living creature's DNA life-foundation.

Verb Form I

• سورة الأنعام: ٧٩
إِنِّى وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِىَ لِلَّذِى **فَطَرَ** ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًۭا وَمَآ أَنَا۠ مِنَ ٱلْمُشْرِكِينَ

• Sūrat al-An'ām: 79
"For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, toward Him Who **created** the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah."

This late Meccan *sūrah* reveals how Abraham (إبراهيم), the friend of God (خليل الله), first believes. Ṭabarī explains that Abraham turned from his father's (أزر's) pagan faith after Allah displays truth to him[99] through the "laws of the heavens and the earth" (Sūrat al-An'ām: 75-78). One-by-one after looking at the stars, moon, and sun, Abraham, eventually convinced Allah is the true God, sets his face (وجه) towards the one who

---

[97]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 16:7.

[98]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 15:11.

[99]Ibid., 7:251-52.

created (فطر) them. فطر means "created" (خلق), writes Ṭabarī;[100] and to set one's face towards the one "who created the heavens and the earth" means to "purpose his worship (عبادة) and monotheistic faith (توحيد) towards Allah."[101] Inclining himself towards truth makes Abraham a حنيف, the opposite of a مشرك, or polytheist.[102]

• سورة هود: ٥١
يَٰقَوْمِ لَآ أَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا ۖ إِنْ أَجْرِىَ إِلَّا عَلَى ٱلَّذِى **فَطَرَنِى** ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

• Sūrat Hūd: 51
"O my people! I ask of you no reward for this (Message). My reward is from none but Him Who **created me**: will ye not then understand?

The prophet Hūd in this verse prophecies to "his people, ʿĀd, against false gods . . ."[103] Jalalayn directs attention to the previous verse where Hūd calls the people of ʿĀd to worship no other god other than Allah. Hūd in the next verse says "O my people! I ask of you no reward for this (Message)." Jalalayn writes that this "message" Hūd proclaims *is* monotheism (توحيد) and that his reward (and authority) comes from Allah, the one who created him (فطر).[104] Qurṭubī adds that فطر relates directly to the noun *fiṭrah*, referring to the "beginning of all creation [or mankind] (ابتداء الخلق والفطرة)."[105]

• سورة الإسراء: ٥١
أَوْ خَلْقًا مِّمَّا يَكْبُرُ فِى صُدُورِكُمْ ۚ فَسَيَقُولُونَ مَن يُعِيدُنَا ۖ قُلِ ٱلَّذِى **فَطَرَكُمْ** ۚ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۚ فَسَيُنْغِضُونَ إِلَيْكَ رُءُوسَهُمْ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هُوَ ۖ قُلْ عَسَىٰٓ أَن يَكُونَ قَرِيبًا

• Sūrat al-Isrāʾ: 51

---

[100]Ibid., 7:252.

[101]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 7:20.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 509.

[104]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 227.

[105]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 9:35.

"Or created matter which, in your minds, is hardest (to be raised up)--(yet shall ye be raised up)!" Then will they say: "Who will cause us to return?" Say: "He Who **created you** first!" Then will they wag their heads towards thee, and say "When will that be?" Say "May be it will be quite soon!

This verse's context occurs within Muḥammad's "mystic"[106] night excursion from the Sacred Mosque (المسجد الحرام) to the Farthest Mosque (المسجد الاقصا). In this verse Islam's prophet admonishes those denying Allah's power to raise the dead (Sūrat al-Isrā': 1, 47-52). After the unbelievers' retort, "Who will bring us back (to life)?" Allah orders Muḥammad's response, "Say, He Who created you at first." Jalalayn, like Yusuf 'Ali, defines فطركم to mean "created you" (خلقكم), emphasizing فطر's connection to "at the first" (أوّل مرّة).[107] Ibn Kathīr expounding the phrase "He Who created you at first", writes, "Meaning, he who created you when you were nothing (لم تكونوا شيئًا مذكورًا) and then you became human propagating . . ."[108]

• سورة طه: ٧٢
قَالُواْ لَن نُّؤْثِرَكَ عَلَىٰ مَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَٱلَّذِى **فَطَرَنَا** فَٱقْضِ مَآ أَنتَ قَاضٍ ۖ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِى هَٰذِهِ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَا

• Sūrat Ṭā Hā: 72
They said: "Never shall we regard thee as more than the Clear Signs that have come to us or than Him Who **created us**! So decree whatever thou desirest to decree: for thou canst only decree (touching) the life of this world.

The main characters in this verse are Pharaoh, Moses, and Pharaoh's magicians (سحرة). Moses in this verse challenges Egypt's gods by throwing down what is "in thy right hand" (Sūrat Ṭā Hā: 69). As a result of Moses' miracle "swallowing up" the magicians' "fake . . . trick", Pharaoh's sorcerers confess Allah's power is greater over Pharaoh's, saying "Never shall we regard thee [Pharaoh] as more than the Clear Signs

---

[106]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 671.

[107]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 287.

[108]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 4:317.

that have come to us or than Him who created us." Jalalayn[109] and Ṭabarī[110] explain فطرنا as "created us." Ibn Kathīr writes that it is probable Pharaoh's magicians made an oath to Pharaoh in this verse announcing their allegiance to their "فاطر" and "خالق" who originated them from nothing."[111]

• سورة الأنبياء: ٥٦
قَالَ بَل رَّبُّكُمْ رَبُّ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ٱلَّذِى **فَطَرَهُنَّ** وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُم مِّنَ ٱلشَّـٰهِدِينَ

• Sūrat al-Anbiyā: 56
He said "Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, He Who **created them** (from nothing): and I am a witness to this (truth).

This *sūrah* includes excerpts about some of the hardships Allah's prophets (لوط، أيّوب، إسمائيل، إدريس،وإلى الاخر) faced. Abraham in this verse confronts his father's idolatry by describing to him God's true identity: "Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. He who created them [from nothing] . . ." Concerning the meaning of فطر, Yusuf 'Ali writes, "*Faṭara* (42:11) implies, like *bada'a*, بدع the creating of a thing out of nothing and after no pre-existing similitude, but perhaps *faṭara* implies the creation of primeval matter to which further processes have to be applied later . . ."[112] Jalalayn comments, saying, "[Allah] created them [the heavens and the earth] upon a model which previously did not exist."[113]

• سورة يس: ٢٢
وَمَا لِىَ لَآ أَعْبُدُ ٱلَّذِى **فَطَرَنِى** وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

• Sūrat Yā Sīn: 22

---

[109]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 316.

[110]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 16:189.

[111]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 4:526.

[112]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 50.

[113]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 326.

"It would not be reasonable in me if I did not serve Him Who **created me**, and to Whom ye shall (all) be brought back.

Yusuf 'Ali writes that this *sūrah* comprises the Qur'an's core essence because it contains the "central figure in the teaching of Islam and the central doctrine of Revelation and the Hereafter."[114] "By way of parable" Muḥammad recites to the rebellious Meccan people Allah's message of *tawḥīd*, or Islam's form of monotheism (Sūrat Yā Sīn: 13-32). After the rebellious Meccans refute this monotheistic message, Muḥammad tells of a man from "the farthest part of the City" who pleads with them, beseeching that they listen to the prophets in the parable. This *man* tells them to "obey" and then gives them the reason why: "It would not be reasonable in me if I did not serve Him Who created me, and to Whom ye shall (all) be brought back." Jalalayn[115] and Qurṭubī[116] write that فطر means "created" (خلق). Ṭabarī translates the man's reason, "Meaning, is there anything keeping me from worshiping the Lord who created me?"[117]

• سورة الزخرف: ٢٧
إِلَّا ٱلَّذِى **فَطَرَنِى** فَإِنَّهُۥ سَيَهْدِينِ

• Sūrat al-Zukhruf: 27
"(I worship) only Him Who **originated me**, and He will certainly guide me."

This *sūrah's* message through examples of Allah's prophets (Abraham, Moses, Jesus) exposes the world's "Gold Adornments" (زخرف).[118] The first, Abraham, said "to his father and his people: 'I do indeed clear myself of what ye worship: (I worship) only

---

[114]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 1116.

[115]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 441.

[116]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 15:14.

[117]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 18:160.

[118]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 1263.

Him Who made me, and He will certainly guide me" (Sūrat al-Zukhruf: 26-27). Qurṭubī explains why Abraham left his father's (أزر's) religion, writing, "Because they [أزر's people] worshiped Allah and their gods";[119] Ṭabarī also gives Abraham's line of reasoning behind leaving his father's beliefs: "Indeed I am innocent from things you worship except he who created me (فطرني), meaning, he who created me because it is he who will guide me."[120]

Analysis. Studying Form I of ف – ط - ر in this section provides greater clarity into this root's meaning. Qurṭubī, Jalalayn, Ṭabarī, and Ibn Kathīr solely connect فطر to Allah's creative power. فطر is only used in the Qur'an with Allah as its subject, and from the standpoint that he creates the world (mankind, heavens, earth, etc.) from nothing. Yusuf 'Ali also comments that فطر produces "primeval" matter, infusing primordial substance into all of God's creation. Whether it is Pharaoh's magicians (Sūrat Ṭā Hā: 72) or a man from "the farthest part of the City" (Sūrat Yā Sīn: 22; i.e. non-Muslims), because the فاطر (the Creator) فطرهم (created them), they inherently know Allah is God and must be worshiped. Allah is the one who began their lives and the one to whom they will return in the Hereafter.

Verb-Form I—*Faṭara* & Noun—*Fiṭrah*

• سورة الروم: ٣٠
فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا **فِطْرَتَ** اللَّهِ الَّتِي **فَطَرَ** النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

• Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 (Yūsuf 'Ali)

---

[119]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 16:51.

[120]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 25:62.

So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the faith: (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the **pattern** on which He has **made** mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not.

- Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 (Pickthal)

So set thy purpose (O Muhammad) for religion as a man by nature upright - **the nature** (framed) of Allah, in which He hath **created** man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation. That is the right religion, but most men know not

- Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 (Ṣaḥīḥ International)

So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the **fitrah** of Allah upon which He has **created** [all] people. No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.

- Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 (Muḥsin Khān)

So set you your face towards the religion of pure Islamic Monotheism Hanifa Allah's **Fitrah**, with which He has **created** mankind. No change let there be in Khalq-illah, that is the straight religion, but most of men know not.

- Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 (Shakīr)

Then set your face upright for religion in the right state-- the **nature** made by Allah in which He has **made** men; there is no altering of Allah's creation; that is the right religion, but most people do not know—

- Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 (Ghāli)

So set your face upright to the religion, unswervingly upright; (this religion is) the **original disposition** from Allah upon which He **originated** (Literally: constituted) mankind. There is no exchange for the creation of Allah. That is the most upright religion, but most of mankind do not know.

The above versions of Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 reveal the complexity each translator has rendering the English equivalent of *fiṭrah* (the *first* bold word in each translation).[121] The Form I verb (فطر) translation (*second* bold word) is rendered either "made," "created," or "originated." These three English meanings for فطر are similar to the Form I verbs studied in the previous sub-section. As for the noun *fiṭrah*, it occurs in the Qur'an only once. As a result, Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 plays a pivotal role defining man's nature in Islam. The following four-part plan aims at providing *fiṭrah's* core qur'anic meaning: 1) Sūrat al-Rūm's general context, 2) meaning part I: "So direct your face toward the

---

[121]Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 uses *fiṭrat* (فطرت) instead of *fiṭrah* (فطرة). They are grammatical equivalents (Penrice, 111).

religion, inclining to truth",[122] 3) meaning part II: "[Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people", and 4) meaning part III: "No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion." Analysis is provided after each part.

Sūrat al-Rūm's general context. This Meccan *sūrah* begins with an important historical marker by referencing the Roman Empire's (الروم refers to Rome) defeat (Sūrat al-Rūm: 2) of the Persian army in approximately the year AD 615.[123] This is when the Persian army's victory over Rome extended its borders into the land of Syria (الشام) emboldening the majority non-Muslim Quraysh. Like the Persians, these pagans from Mecca worshipped multiple gods (مشركين) and hoped Persia's emergent military prowess would also defeat Islam's prophet.[124] As Muḥammad predicts, and around the same time period that Allah gave victory to the Muslims at the Battle of Badr (AD 624), the Roman army returns to power defeating the Persians.[125] "The Believers rejoice[d] . . ." (the Meccan Muslims), as a result (Sūrat al-Rūm: 4).

Following Sūrat al-Rūm's first four verses the literary mood shifts from Allah's specific sovereignty over regional events, to his general sovereignty over mankind. Muḥammad gives an example of this latter theme when he recites (Sūrat al-Rūm: 9):

---

[122]Part I, II, and III titles use the Ṣaḥīḥ International version due to the fact that it gives a more accurate word-for-word English translation for Sūrat al-Rūm: 30.

[123]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 1006.

[124]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 14:3.

[125]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 21:20-21.

> Do they [unbelievers] not travel through the earth, and see what was the End of those before them? They were superior to them in strength: they tilled the soil and populated it in greater numbers than these have done: there came to them their messengers with Clear (Signs) (which they rejected, to their own destruction): it was not Allah, Who wronged them but they wronged their own souls.

This verse provides an excellent backdrop for the remainder of Sūrat al-Rūm's context: 1) unbelievers (مشركين) are the primary audience, 2) unbelievers are challenged to think seriously about their destiny on Judgment Day, and 3) unbelievers are called to believe in Allah through Muḥammad's revelation (i.e. the Qur'an).

Jalalayn (Sūrat al-Rūm: 11) comments how Allah creates people and then after their death brings life to them a second time (خلقهم بعد موتهم) for the "Hour" (Sūrat al-Rūm: 12) of judgment.[126] Muḥammad repeatedly recites this similar theme—life-death-life-judgment—five more times Sūrat al-Rūm (19, 27, 40, 50, 54).

One of the most important methods Allah uses to prod مشركين into considering their life-purpose is by "creating . . . His Signs" for them. Ibn Kathīr, commenting on Sūrat al-Rūm: 20-21, explains that Allah's "signs," such as the creation of mankind through Adam and the institution of marriage, "point to [دالة على] his [Allah's] greatness (عظمته), perfection (كماله), and power (قدرته)."[127] Other signs in Sūrat al-Rūm pointing men to Allah's greatness are: the creation of the heavens and earth (22), the different languages and ethnicities (السنات والالوان) that exist (22), the sleep (منام) Allah gives men both day and night (23), the lightning and rain from the sky (24), Allah's ability to sustain heaven and earth by his word (25), the winds that power ships (46), and the Qur'an's revelation so that on Judgment Day man has "no excuse" (58).

---

[126]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 405.

[127]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 5:354.

Sūrat al-Rūm's third contextual element, i.e. calling unbelievers to belief in Allah, starts in Sūrat al-Rūm: 28. Specifically, in the two verses preceding Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, Allah beseeches the Meccan مشركين to realize that the money earned and sustaining (رزق) their lives does not actually come from others (شركاء), but from Allah alone. "Truly I [Allah] own all of you (انا مالك جميعكم)"; thus, the Meccans should solely venerate (عبادة) Allah.[128] Those who fail in heeding this command are named "wrongdoers" (Sūrat al-Rūm: 29); and it is said of them that "They follow their own lusts, being devoid of knowledge . . ." After *fiṭrah's* single qur'anic usage in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, Allah commands the Meccan unbelievers to "Turn ye back in repentance to Him, and fear Him: establish regular prayers, and be not ye among those who join gods with Allah "(Sūrat al-Rūm: 31). According to Qurṭubī, Allah in Sūrat al-Rūm: 31 commands the مشركين to follow "توحيد," or Islam's form of monotheism.[129]

Sūrat al-Rūm's final twenty-eight verses consistently contain Allah's message for unbelievers to avoid his punishment (39, 44, 45, 55, 57) of شرك (polytheism; 33, 40, 42) by accepting the "right Religion" (الدين القيّم). Those who "hear, who believe in Our Signs and submit" (53) to Islam's *tawḥīd* found in the Qur'an (58), will be "saved" (مخلصون), Jalalayn writes.[130]

Analysis. The context surrounding Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 is straightforward. مشركين (the Persians) may appear to prevail over monotheists (the people of al-Rūm, or اهل

---

[128]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 21:38.

[129]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 14:22.

[130]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 410.

الكتاب). Needless to say, Allah controls the destiny of all world events and more importantly, the people involved in them. The path unbelievers travel down leads to terrible judgment. مشركين, therefore, need only open their eyes and ponder Allah's signs in order to realize that God's creation points to its Creator. In Allah's mercy he provides a second avenue mankind can know him by and avoid his wrath— he sends messengers to preach *tawḥīd*. The last messenger preaching *tawḥīd* is Muḥammad. He recites the Qur'an and those who believe in its revelations follow the "right religion." This phrase "right religion" refers to Allah's *tawḥīd* and its adherents are Muslims.

Meaning part I

• فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا

• So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth

Ṭabarī states that Form II verb command سدّد وجهك, which means "So guide your face," is an appropriate substitute for "So direct your face" (أقم وجهك). Ṭabarī explains Part I to mean, "Guide your face towards the face of the one who directed you to him your Lord oh Muḥammad in obedience to him (لطاعته), and it [the obedience] is the religion (الدين)."[131] Qurṭubī's commentary explains Part I to mean "follow the حنيف religion" (إتباع الدين الحنيف)."[132] Ibn Kathīr adds that Part I's full phrase means, "Oh Muḥammad, continue in what Allah prescribed for you, from *al-ḥanifiyyah* the religion of

---

[131]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 21:40.

[132]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 14:16.

Abraham (ملّة إبراهيم) which Allah guided you to it, and completed it for you with the utmost perfection (غاية الكمال) . . ."[133]

From Qurṭubī and Ibn Kathīr's standpoint, "the religion, inclining towards the truth," refers to the "حنيف religion," or the "religion of Abraham." Earlier in this section Sūrat al-An'ām: 79 (Verb-Form I) gives the meaning "created" for فطر. Within this verse Muḥammad uses حنيفًا when reciting, "For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, toward Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah [to not be among the *mushrikīn*]." The phrase "firmly and truly" is Saḥih International's attempt to correctly translate حنيفًا (Yūsuf 'Ali renders حنيفًا as "pure in faith"). Muḥammad resolves to "set" his face حنيفًا towards Allah who فطر (created) the heavens and the earth; and then Muḥammad links حنيفًا to the last segment, "never shall I give partners to Allah."

It is حنيفًا, hence, to follow the Creator (الفاطر), but un-حنيفًا to worship other gods. Moreover, Sūrat al-'Imrān: 67 says, "Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was an upright man (حنيفًا), a Muslim, and he was never one of the idolaters (مشركين)." Ibn Kathīr from his prior quote designates Abraham a حنيف, one that worships Allah alone, but then further describes how Muḥammad's religion is the same as Abraham's but "completed . . . with the utmost perfection." This final and perfected "religion of Abraham" that Allah gives Muḥammad is Islam. From the above information, the Part I meaning of Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 is plain: Allah commands

---

[133]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 5:358.

Muḥammad to follow the perfected religion of Abraham, i.e. Islam, worshiping Allah alone.

Meaning part II

- فِطْرَتَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّتِى فَطَرَ ٱلنَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا
- [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people

Part II of Sūrat al-Rūm:30 contains a Form I verb and *the* single occurrence of *fiṭrah*. Iṣfahānī says that this Part II phrase refers to the knowledge of God that Allah "originated (أبدع) and embedded (ركّز) in humans." The "*fiṭrah* of Allah," Iṣfahānī continues, is the power (القوّة) Allah places into every man giving him the "knowledge of the faith" (معرفة الايمان).[134] Jurjāni, in similar fashion, defines *fiṭrah* as man's "natural disposition prepared (الجبلّة المتهيّئة) to accept the religion (الدين)."[135] More specifically, Part II refers to "the nature (الخلقة) by which every newborn is created in (يُخلق عليها المولود) while inside his mother's womb." In fact, "every human being (انسان) was created (فُطِر) knowing Allah (على معرفته) in that Allah is Lord of everything and its Creator."[136]

Breaking down Part II's grammar, Ṭabarī notes that *fiṭrah* is in the accusative case (نُصِبت على فطرة), is the infinitive of فطر, and consequently, Part II should read: "Allah created (فطر) people upon that *fiṭrah*."[137] This precise nature which all human beings are born with, Ibn Kathīr says, is the "knowledge of him [Allah] and *tawḥīd*." None of

---

[134]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 2:575.

[135]Jurjānī, *Al-Ta'rifat*, 183.

[136]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 5:3433.

[137]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 21:40.

God's creation escapes *fiṭrah's* spiritual essence. All are born with an "upright nature" (الجبلّة المستقيمة).[138] Yūsuf 'Ali writes in detail about man's condition as a result of Allah infusing mankind with *fiṭrah*:

> As turned out from the creative hand of Allah, man is innocent, pure, true, free, inclined to right and virtue, and endued with true understanding about his own position in the Universe and about Allah's goodness, wisdom, and power.[139]

According to Ibn Manẓūr,[140] Qurṭubī,[141] Ṭabarī,[142] and Ibn Kathīr,[143] "the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people" relates *directly* to a pre-existential covenant Allah makes in Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172 with Adam's progeny.

• سورة الأعراف: ١٧٢
وَإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنۢ بَنِىٓ ءَادَمَ مِن ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ ۖ قَالُوا۟ بَلَىٰ ۛ شَهِدْنَآ ۛ أَن تَقُولُوا۟ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَٰذَا غَٰفِلِينَ

• Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172

When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam— from their loins— their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?"— They said: "Yea! we do testify!" (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "of this we were never mindful."

Sūrat al-A'rāf:172 (Meccan) occurs within a general chronological sequence beginning with Adam's narrative in *jannah* (the Garden of Eden) and إبليس's (Satan's) temptation. Later in this *sūrah* Allah reminds the Meccan pagans about Noah's struggle against evil men and the resulting Flood. The great prophet Moses was also not immune from enduring opposition from rebellious men like Pharaoh and his army, and even his own

---

[138]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 5:359.

[139]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 1016.

[140]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 5:3433-434.

[141]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 14:21.

[142]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 21:40.

[143]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 5:358.

people, the Israelites. In general, Allah in Sūrat al-A'rāf reminds the Meccans about the numerous covenants (مواثيق) he makes through his prophets with every generation of people; and in response, they vow allegiance. If for some reason, though, someone on Judgment Day claims ignorance for not knowing and worshiping Allah, his answer to him is Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172.[144] In fact, Allah commissions each of his messengers to remind mankind about this pre-existential covenant he made with humanity.

The first part of Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172—"When thy Lord drew forth from the Children of Adam— from their loins— their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): 'Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?'"—speaks of an unspecified time when the Lord "extracted" from Adam's "loins" (أصلاب)[145] Adam's entire "offspring" (ذرية).[146] At this moment the Lord asked Adam's descendants, "Am I not your Lord", which Qurṭubī[147] and Ṭabarī's[148] commentaries inform is Allah providing every person a chance to confess "توحيد" (the oneness of Allah).

The second part of Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172—"They said: 'Yea! we do testify!' (This), lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "of this we were never mindful."—provides Adam's progeny's answer. They respond in the affirmative, testifying (شهدنا) that Allah alone is Lord. Ibn Kathīr's explanation about mankind's answer returns the

---

[144]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 344.

[145]Abī Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsir Al-Tabari: Jami' Al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Ay Al-Qur'an*, ed. Mahmud Muhammad Shakir (Egypt: Dar Al-Ma'arif bi Misr, 1958), 13:222.

[146]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 7:202.

[147]Ibid., 4:200.

[148]al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsir Al-Tabari: Jami' Al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Ay Al-Qur'an*, 13:222.

focus back to "fitrah of Allah." After asking Adam's progeny, "Am I not your Lord," they respond "by testifying to themselves that Allah is their Lord and Owner (مليك), and that there is no other god except him. Just as he the Exalted created them (فطرهم) upon that [*tawḥīd*] and fashioned them with it." Ibn Kathīr finishes the quote by citing Sūrat al-Rūm: 30.[149]

Before Adam's descendants were born, Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172 teaches that they verbally confess allegiance to Allah ratifying a pre-existential covenant. Zero excuses can be made on "the Day of Judgment"; and the *fiṭrah* that Allah embeds in them from the time of conception is a product of this pre-existential covenant, testifying to Allah's *tawḥīd*.

Meaning part III

• لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ ٱللَّهِ ذَٰلِكَ ٱلدِّينُ ٱلْقَيِّمُ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ ٱلنَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

• No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.

There are many views about the meaning of Part III. Jalalayn explains that "No change should there be in the creation of Allah" refers to "his [Allah's] religion (دينه). Meaning, do not alter it by associating partners [with Allah] (لا تبدلوه بأن تشركوا)."[150] The large majority of Ṭabarī's comments agree with Jalalayn's, i.e. "No change should there be in the creation of Allah" means "religion" (دين). Ibn Manẓūr in *Lisān al-'Arab* provides insight into the theological and philosophical debates occurring in early Islamic

---

[149]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 3:245.

[150]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 407.

history concerning Part III.[151] Abu Hurayrah says "that natural disposition (الخلقة) which [الله] created them in, it is either for heaven (جنّة) or hell (نار)."[152] Similarly, Qurṭubī comments that "No change should there be in the creation of Allah" means that ". . . there is no altering it [*fiṭrah*] from the standpoint of the Creator (من جهة الخالق). And the command does not contradict this [phrase]; which says 'No one is unhappy who [Allah] created happy (سعيدًا), and no one is happy who [Allah] created unhappy (شقيًا)."[153] These last two quotes expose the uncertainty between Muslim scholars regarding what aspect of the "creation of Allah" (خلق الله) can and cannot be changed. Is it Allah's *fiṭrah* or Allah's *fiṭrah* in man that cannot be altered? The belief in God's pre-determinism (القضاء والقدر) during the first three centuries of Islamic history heavily influenced many Muslim scholars' qur'anic hermeneutic. As a whole, though, the qur'anic definition of "No change should there be in the creation of Allah," refers to the religion of Allah (دين الله) that he embeds inside every man through *fiṭrah*.

Allah's religion is pre-existential, producing primordial *tawḥīd*, or *fiṭrah*, in man. The last part—"That is the correct religion . . ."—refers to this primordial substance. Ṣaḥīḥ International chooses to translate الدين القيّم: "the correct religion." Yūsuf 'Ali translates it, "standard Religion," Pickthal "right religion," Muḥsin Khān, "straight religion," Shakīr, right religion," and Dr. Ghālī, renders الدين القيّم, "upright religion."

---

[151]The last section of this chapter covers *fiṭrah's* theological and philosophical development throughout Islamic history by studying its chief writers.

[152]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 5:3434.

[153]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 14:22.

Iṣfahānī defines الدين القيّم, writing "There was not made any crookedness (عواج) in it."[154] Pernice defines it as meaning a "right" or "true" religion.[155] The literal sense, then, is that "the correct religion" is Allah's religion which is "straight," without any "crookedness" or imperfections. This religion is universally present in man and inclines towards Allah's oneness. Even so, ". . . most of the people do not know."

Unfortunately, despite Allah implanting primordial *tawḥīd*, or *fiṭrah*, in every man, Jalalayn comments that the Meccan unbelievers (كُفّار مكّة) did not know "توحيد الله," or Allah's oneness, which he created (فطر) man upon.[156] Al-Ḥisāb al-Qayyim states that most do not know the حنيف religion (الدين القيّم): "the religion of truth."[157] Qurṭubī comments about الدين القيّم writing, "They do not ponder (يتفكّر) so they do not know they have a divine Creator (خالقًا معبودًا), and an eternal God where his divine decree (قضاءه) pre-existed and rule executed."[158]

Analysis. Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 contains *fiṭrah's* sole occurrence. From the onset of Part I's explanation, *fiṭrah's* affiliation to man is spiritual. Allah commands Muḥammad to "direct" his "face toward the religion (الدين), inclining to truth (حنيفًا)." Before Judaism and Christianity, Allah calls Abraham to leave his father's idols and worship him alone. The Qur'an calls Abraham a حنيف. The first and most rudimentary

---

[154]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 2:629.

[155]John Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004), 121.

[156]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 407.

[157]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 21:42.

[158]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 14:22.

religion Allah creates, then, is الحنيفية, the religion of *tawḥīd*. Allah commands Muḥammad in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 to follow "the religion," حنيفًا, or as Abraham did, worshiping one God. Allah then tells Muḥammad that he creates (فطر) all people with *fiṭrah*, which Ibn Manẓūr, Qurṭubī, Ṭabarī, and Ibn Kathīr all link to the pre-existential covenant Allah makes with Adam's descendants. In Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172 pre-born humanity confesses Allah alone is Lord. This oneness of God mindset *is* the *fiṭrah* by which Allah creates every human being. Allah, moreover, tells Muḥammad in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 that no one can change how he creates man, i.e. to know him as Lord. This God-mindedness towards *tawḥīd is* man's essence, *is* the "correct religion", and *is* *fiṭrah*'s nature. "Most men", however, Allah informs Muḥammad, "do not know", or *practice*, God's *tawḥīd*.

In closing, ف – ط - ر's Arabic root in the Qur'an occurs in different forms but is consistent in meaning. The active participle, فاطر, refers to Allah as Creator of the heavens and the earth. Ibn Kathīr adds that the Creator (الفاطر) infuses all creation with a "sound nature" (الفطر السليمة) that acknowledges him as the one true God. Verb Form I, فطر, similarly refers to Allah's creative ability and to a "primeval substance" he infuses into people prompting men to know him. The general context surrounding the sole occurrence of *fiṭrah* in Sūrat al-Rūm tells how Allah speaks to mankind through creation and his prophets so that they will follow him. Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 fully embodies ف – ط - ر's core *qur'anic* meaning. On one hand, God creates (فطر) man. On the other hand, as he does, he purposely places in him *tawḥīd*'s essence, or *fiṭrah*, leading him to the knowledge of Allah as Lord.

Defining *Fiṭrah* from the *Ḥadīth*

The term *fiṭrah* occurs once in the Qur'an. Muḥammad's disciples, the Companions (الصحابة), however, record their prophet mentioning it over fifteen times.[159] This section examines the traditions chosen and recorded by the two most trusted *ḥadīth* collectors, Muslim and Bukhārī.[160]

- أن أبا هريرة: قال: قال رسول الله: "ما من مولود إلا يولد على الفطرة ، فأبواهُ يهودانه، أو ينصرانهُ، أو يمجسانهُ، كما تنتج البهيمة بهيمة جمعاء، هل تحسون فيها من جدعاء". ثم يقول أبو هريرة: ((فطرة الله التي فطر الناس عليها لا تبديل لخلق الله ذلك الدين القيم)).
- Abu Huraira narrated: Allah's Apostle said: "No child is born except on Al-Fitra (Islam) and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian, as an animal produces a perfect young animal; do you see any part of its body amputated? Then he recited: The religion of pure Islamic Faith (Hanifa) (i.e. to worship none but Allah) the pure Allah's Islamic nature with which He (Allah) has created mankind. Let there be no change in Allah's religion (i.e. to join none in Allah's worship). That is the straight religion" (30:30)[161]

The most significant *ḥadīth* concerning *fiṭrah*[162] is this one narrated by Abu Hurayrah[163] who is the leading transmitter of Muḥammad's traditions, memorizing over five thousand.[164] Just as Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 plays the pivotal role defining *fiṭrah's qur'anic* meaning, this tradition by Abu Hurayrah defines *fiṭrah's traditional* meaning.

---

[159]Selçuk Coşkun, "On the Use of 'Fitrah ' as a Measure in Determining Whether a Narrated Hadīth Belongs to the Prophet Muhammad," *Journal of Hadith Studies* 6, no. 1 (2008): 32.

[160]Yāsir Darwīsh, *Al-Hadith Al-Nabawi Fī Al-Mu'jam Al-'arabi* (الحديث النبوي في المعجم العربي): *Min Bidayat Al-Qarn Al-Khamis Ila Nihayat Al-Qarn Al-Tasi' Al-Hijriyayn*, 1st ed. (Egypt: Dar al-'Asr al-Jadid, 2013), 51-54.

[161]Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, 6:328-29, Surat al-Rum, #4775.

[162]For the remainder of this dissertation the writer refers to this *ḥadīth* by Abu Hurayrah as the "Core *ḥadīth*."

[163]There are a few other traditions narrated by other Companions similar to this one that have slight variations in wording.

[164]Darwīsh, *Al-Hadith Al-Nabawi Fī Al-Mu'jam Al-'arabi*, 14.

Grasping *fiṭrah's* meaning in this Core *ḥadīth* starts by looking at its designated title in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. In the former, this Core *ḥadīth* occurs three times in the "Book of Funerals" (كتاب الجنائز) and once in the "Book of Commentary" (كتاب التفسير) for Sūrat al-Rūm: 30.[165] In the latter, this Core *ḥadīth* occurs multiple times in slightly different variations in the "Book of Predestination" (كتاب القدر).[166] Both Imām al-Bukhārī (d. 256 AH) and Imām Muslim (d. 261 AH) died towards the end of the ninth century which allows their *ḥadīth* corpora to pinpoint *fiṭrah's* meaning at that period of Islamic history. Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim's title containing this Core *ḥadīth* sheds more light on *fiṭrah's* contextual significance within the Islamic community. The title reads, "Everyone is Born According to His True Nature and the Command Pertaining to the Demise of the Children of the Infidels and of the Children of the Muslims."[167] What is the nature (*fiṭrah*) of every person born; and if an "infidel" or "Muslim" child dies, how does Allah "command" his destiny (القدر), i.e. does Allah send him to heaven or hell?—These are the two broad contexts motivating Muslims' interests about *fiṭrah* in Islam's first few centuries. Approximately ten centuries later (1971), Ṣadīqī provides his commentary to this Core *ḥadīth*. Ṣadīqī writes:

> This ḥadīth states a fundamental principle of Islam which repudiates the idea of the original sin or pre-natal sin and holds that everyone comes pure from the Hands of his Maker and is born in the

---

[165]Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, #1358, #1359, #1385, #4775.

[166]Ibn Hajj al-Qushayr Muslim, *Sahih Muslim: Being Traditions of the Sayings and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title Al-Jami-Us-Sahih*, trans. 'Abdul Hameed Siddiqi (Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 2001), 4:1398, #6423, #6425-6429.

[167]Ibid., 4:1398.

> nature of Islam. It is his parents, his social environments which cause him to deviate from his true nature and set him on wrong paths.[168]

This Core *ḥadīth*, as quoted above, led to Muḥammad reciting *fiṭrah's* single occurrence in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. For this reason, the next section examines the Core *ḥadīth* more in-depth.

Part I: "No child . . ."

"No child . . ." (كلّ مولود), Bukhārī states, pertains to Adam's descendants, or "the sons of Adam" (بني أدم). Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, 'Asqalānī writes, "confused" (استشكل) Part I's meaning by explaining how after each infant is born that he eventually becomes Jewish, Christian, or another religion. This is not correct, however, 'Asqalānī states, because the Core *ḥadīth* assumes some children remain Muslims and that unbelief (كُفْر) is not inherent in their nature (طبع).[169]

Part II: ". . . is born except on Al-Fitra . . ."

Ibn al-Athīr writes that *fiṭrah* refers to "a kind of natural disposition (الجبلّة) and nature (طبع) prepared for accepting the religion (الدين), and if he [the child] is left in *fiṭrah* [undisturbed] then he will continue in it and not depart to another religion . . ."[170] Imām Muslim lists a similar *ḥadīth* narrated by Mu'āwiya providing information pertaining to the *duration* of a child's *fiṭrah*. This tradition by Mu'āwiya says: "Every new-born babe

---

[168]Ibid.

[169]Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl Bukhārī, *Fath Al-Bari Bi-Sharh SahīH Al-Bukhari* (فتح الباري بشرح صحيح البخاري), ed. Taqi Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib (Dar al-Riyan lil-Turath, 1986), Kitab al-Jana'iz: 292.

[170]Majd al-Dīn al-Mubārak ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Nihayah Fi Gharib Al-Hadith Wa-Al-Athar* (Saudi Arabia: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2000), 710.

is born on the millat (of Islam and he) remains on this until his tongue is enabled to express himself."[171] This ḥadīth adds a new slant to the Core *ḥadīth*: it first substitutes ملّة (religion) for *fiṭrah* and second, states each child remains in this state until he can verbally express himself (i.e. his beliefs). Ibn 'Abd al-Barr disagrees about the latter point; He states that non-Muslim children are born upon *fiṭrah*, yet they immediately conform to their parents' religion. However, when they reach maturity (بلوغ), whatever they decide, this becomes their religion.[172]

Concerning the meaning of *fiṭrah* in the Core *ḥadīth*, Islam's forefathers' (السلف) views differ, though according to Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and others, the most popular views (أشهر الاقوال) define *fiṭrah* as Islam.[173] Another version of the Core *ḥadīth* by 'Asqalānī supports this view. This tradition by Ibn Shihāb tells how Islam's prophet prays for Muslim babies who died during childbirth because they were born with Islam's *fiṭrah* (فطرة الاسلام). If the mother was non-Muslim (إن كانت امه غير الاسلام), after the child was delivered and if he began to cry, Muḥammad prayed over him; however, if she had a miscarriage (سِقْط), he would refrain from praying. Following this explanation, Ibn Shihāb quotes the Core *ḥadīth*, implying that though the non-Muslim child dies, he is still born upon Islam's nature (فطرة الاسلام) and in heaven (جنّة).[174]

---

[171]Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, 4:1399, #6427.

[172]Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and Bukhārī, *Fath Al-Bari*, Kitab al-Jana'iz: 292.

[173]Ibid.

[174]Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, 263, #1358.

Part III: ". . . and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian . . ."

Rāfi'ī provides detailed commentary about non-Muslim parents in Part III. He explains that before non-Muslim children reach maturity (قبل بلوغهم) the parents' religious upbringing (تهويد وتنصير) makes them (باقامتهم على الشرك) مشركين. The parents therefore deserve severe "rebuke" (توبيخ) and "shame" (تقبيح).[175] Bukhārī's commentary states, "the change [to the child's *fiṭrah*] is due to his parents, either by the teaching or desiring for their child to be in it [their religion] (بتعليمه إياه أو بتر غيبهم فيه), his being follows them [his parents] in the religion (الدين). . ."[176]

Though it appears Part III places the onus on parents to preserve or distort their children's Islamic *fiṭrah*, other Muslim scholars hold to the doctrine of "fate and divine decree" (القضاء والقدر),[177] nullifying *fiṭrah's* influence in man. They claim Allah determines man's fate, not *fiṭrah*. One of many verses supporting God's determinism comes from Sūrat al-A'rāf: 30 which says, "Some He [Allah] has guided while for some error is their just desert . . ." Pre-determinism supporters allege this verse means that Allah creates some men for guidance (الهدى) and some for error (الضلالة). If Allah makes man for guidance (صيّر), even if he does bad things, then he goes to *jannah*. On the

---

[175]Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Fayyūmī, *Al-Misbah Al-Munir Fi Gharib Al-Sharh Al-Kabir Lil-Rafi'i* (المصباح المنير في غريب الشرح الكبير للرافعي), ed. 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad Rafi'i (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1978), 2:572-73.

[176]Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and Bukhārī, *Fath Al-Bari*, Kitab al-Jana'iz: 294.

[177]Wehr and Cowan, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, 772.

contrary, if a person lives a good life but Allah creates him for error, then he goes to hell.[178]

A tradition narrated by ʿĀʾishah, listed in the same chapter as the Core *ḥadīth*, also diminishes *fiṭrah's* significance. It reads:

> • وجاء معناه مرفوعا من حديث عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت : دعي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إلى جنازة غلام من الأنصار فقلت : يا رسول الله ، طوبى لهذا عصفور من عصافير الجنة ، لم يعمل السوء ولم يدركه ، قال : أو غير ذلك يا عائشة ، إن الله خلق للجنة أهلا خلقهم لها وهم في أصلاب آبائهم ، وخلق للنار أهلا خلقهم لها وهم في أصلاب آبائهم
>
> • ʿĀʾisha, the mother of the believers, said that Allah's Messenger (may peace be upon him) was called to lead the funeral prayer of a child of the Ansār. I said: Allah's Messenger, there is happiness for this child who is a bird from the birds of Paradise for it committed no sin nor has he reached the age when one can commit sin. He said: ʿĀʾisha, per adventure, it may be otherwise, because God created for Paradise those who are fit for it while they were yet in their father's loins and created for Hell those who are to go to Hell. He created them for Hell while they were yet in their father's loins.[179]

The above tradition seems to contradict the pre-existential covenant Allah makes in Sūrat al-Aʿrāf: 172 whereby all future mankind confesses Allah as Lord. If *tawḥīd* directly relates to man's primordial essence, *fiṭrah*, leading him to Islam, then how can Allah simultaneously predetermine men for heaven and hell "while they were yet in their father's loins"? One attempt Muslims make in order to solve this apparent contradiction is by insisting that only *believers* are born with *fiṭrah*, because they say, "if everyone was created (فُطِر) upon Islam, then no one would disbelieve (لما كفر أحد), and that proves he [Allah] created some people for the fire (للنار)."[180]

Part III of the Core *ḥadīth* helps highlight one of Islam's early theological debates about Allah's pre-determining man's eternal destiny and the freedom to choose.

---

[178]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 14:18.

[179]Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, 4:1400, #6436.

[180]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 14:19.

Concerning *fiṭrah*, their dilemma states: If Allah creates mankind upon *fiṭrah*, which leads to faith, then how at the same time can Allah create some for hell?

Part IV: ". . . as an animal produces a perfect young animal; do you see any part of its body amputated?"

The point Muḥammad makes about *fiṭrah* in Part IV is logical. When an animal (بهيمة) gives birth, it does so producing a whole (جمعاء) animal. Normally, at the time of an animal's birth, its appendages are intact and working; no mutilation (جدعاء) has occurred. Any defects which arise in the animal's body happen to it only afterwards through outside influences. Nawawī explains "that an animal gives birth to an animal with all of its members (كاملة الاعضاء), there is no deficiency in it, the amputation and deficiency only happen after its birth."[181] This comparison is identical, 'Asqalānī writes, to what transpires at a child's birth—"The Jews and Christians make their children into Jews and Christians after they are created upon *fiṭrah* [خُلِق على الفطرة] which is analogous to the animal being mutilated after it is born sound (سليمة)."[182] Consequently, although *fiṭrah's* role in man never changes, a child's parents or his own determination (upon reaching maturity) can overpower his eternal vector towards belief in Islam's *tawḥīd*.[183]

Analysis. No Islamic scholar disputes that this Core *ḥadīth* led Muḥammad to recite *fiṭrah's* sole qur'anic appearance in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. Therefore, there is also little

---

[181]al-Qushayrī Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Nawawī, *Sharh Al-Nawawi 'Ala Muslim* (شرح النووي على مسلم) (Cairo: Dar Al-Khayr, 1996), Kitab al-Qadar: 159.

[182]Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and Bukhārī, *Fath Al-Bari*, Kitab al-Jana'iz: 295.

[183]Ibid., 295.

obscurity about *fiṭrah*'s primary context after reviewing the above commentary. *fiṭrah*, the primordial substance Allah embeds into every child, relates mainly to man's spiritual inclination towards *tawḥīd*. When a child is born, because of *fiṭrah*, he is whole, without blemish. Barring any outside opposing religious forces like Judaism or Christianity, *fiṭrah* naturally gravitates one toward belief in Muḥammad's revelation, the Qur'an. As Islam's top scholars in early Islamic history debated about the extent to which Allah pre-determines man's destiny, Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 and this Core *ḥadīth* quickly enter into the on-going theological discussions.

• اللهم أسلمت نفسي إليك، وفوضعت أمري إليك، ووجهت وجهي إليك، وألجأت ظهري إليك، رغبة ورهبة إليك، لا ملجا ولا منجا منك إلا، آمنت بكتابك الذي أنزلت، وبنبيك الذي أرسلت. فإن متّ متّ على الفطرة[١٨٤]

• O God! I fully submit to you. I turned my face to you. Hope guidance in my business from you. I trust you and seek refuge from you and I am afraid of you. There is no one to seek refuge and rescue besides you, you are the only saver. O God! I believe in your book and Prophet you have sent." After these statements, The Prophet said that if one makes the statements above and dies in that night, he will die in a state of *fiṭrah*.[185]

Ibn 'Azib narrates the above tradition in which Muḥammad orders a man (أوصى رجلاً) what to say before lying down for the night. Muḥammad directs him to call out to Allah, declaring his trust and refuge in him. In Allah alone this man should seek salvation (منجا); but to obtain it, Muḥammad advises him to profess belief in two things: "belief" (آمنت) in Allah's book and his "Prophet" (نبيّك). Allah's Messenger assures the man that if he dies in his sleep after repeating these words, "he will die in a state of *fiṭrah*" (على الفطرة).

---

[184]Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, 1214, #6313.

[185]Coşkun, "On the Use of 'Fitrah ' as a Measure in Determining Whether a Narrated Hadīth Belongs to the Prophet Muhammad," 32-33.

• سورة البقرة: ١٧٧
لَّيْسَ ٱلْبِرَّ أَن تُوَلُّوا۟ وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ ٱلْمَشْرِقِ وَٱلْمَغْرِبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱلْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ وَٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ وَٱلْكِتَٰبِ وَٱلنَّبِيِّۦنَ . . .

• Sūrat al-Baqarah: 177
It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness—to believe in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Messengers . . .

"Righteousness" (البرّ) or "the best" (الخير) for man, according to Sūrat al-Baqarah: 177, first equals profession of faith "in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Messengers . . ." These are Islam's core beliefs and form Islam's doctrinal foundation of faith.[186] Haydar writes,

> It is worth mentioning that characterizing Islam by *fiṭrah* does not mean *fiṭrah* is something physical (الجسدية) and outwardly manifest (الظاهرية), because Islam is doctrines (عقائد) and legislative laws (تشريعات) and all of them are grasped by the intellect (مدركة بالعقل) . . .[187]

Analysis. For one to officially become a Muslim, he must confess الشهادة. The confession is two-part: 1) belief in Allah, and 2) belief in prophet Muḥammad. The source to which Muslims go in order to learn about both is Islam's holy book, the Qur'an. Hence, in this tradition Muḥammad directs the man to say الشهادة before going to bed; and through this confession he preserves the *fiṭrah* in which he was born. There is little doubt, then, that *fiṭrah* in this tradition equates to believing in Islam's chief tenets of faith.

• أنه سمع أبا هريرة رضى الله عنه: أن رسول الله أبي ليلة أسري به بإيلياء بقدحين من خمر ولبن، فنظر إليهما، ثم أخذ اللبن، فقال جبريل: الحمد لله الذي هداك للفطرة، ولو أخذت الخمر غوت أمتك.

---

[186]Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ra'ūf Bahnasī, *Al-Islam Wa-Naz'at Al-Fitrah (٢* ,الاسلام ونزعة الفطرة)nd ed., Ma'a Al-Islam (Al-Qāhirah: Mu'assasat al-Khalīj al-'Arabī, 1987), 153-54.

[187]'Abd al-Ghanī Ḥaydar Fārī', *Manhaj Himayat Al-'aqidah Al-Islamiyah Fi Daw' Al-Qur'an Wa-Al-Sunnah Wa-Al-Ittijahat Al-Fikriyah Al-Mu'asirah*, 1st ed. (Ṣan'ā': Maktabat Markaz al-Ṣādiq, 2007), 75.

- The Prophet was offered two glasses, one filled up with milk, and the other with wine during the night of al Isra. He looked at the glasses and accepted the one with milk. Then Jibril (The angel of al wahy) said that "Thanks God who guided you to fitrah, otherwise your followers would go astray.[188]

Abu Hurayrah narrates this tradition which happens during Muḥammad's mystic night journey from the Sacred Mosque (المسجد الحرام) to the Farthest Mosque (المسجد الاقصا).[189] When given the choice between drinking milk or wine, Islam's prophet chooses the former. The angel Gabriel then explains that Muḥammad selects the cup of milk because Allah guides him to the drink associated with *fiṭrah*. The choice of wine, however, Gabriel says, would have led his followers (امة) astray.

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr explains how when Gabriel offers Muḥammad wine and milk, he initially "scrutinized" the wine (تفرّس إليها) and "disliked" (نفر من الخمر) it because Muḥammad knows that Allah declares it "unlawful" (ستُحرَّم) in the future (at that time drinking wine remained permissible).[190] Milk, on the other hand, "was familiar to him [Muḥammad], easy, good, pure, pleasant to those who drink it, of good consequence, which is contrary to wine . . ." *Fiṭrah*, accordingly, stands for "uprightness" (إستقامة) in the "religion of the truth" (الدين الحقّ); but drinking wine would move Muḥammad's followers from the straight path.[191]

Analysis. Each person's *fiṭrah* naturally guides him towards Islam's core beliefs. Outward behavior as a result of God's guidance, though, reflects *fiṭrah's* inner

---

[188]Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, 1099, #5576.

[189]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 671-73.

[190]Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and Bukhārī, *Fath Al-Bari*, Kitab al-Ashribah: 36.

[191]Ibid., 36.

essence. Whoever obeys Allah's will maintains *fiṭrah's* "uprightness" in his life. Despite the "religion of truth" originating inwardly in every man through *fiṭrah*, though, if one decides against Allah's will, poor choices result, leading him and others to the path of destruction.

- عن عائشة قالت قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عشر من الفطرة قص الشارب وإعفاء اللحية والسواك واستنشاق الماء وقص الأظفار وغسل البراجم ونتف الإبط وحلق العانة وانتقاص الماء قال زكرياء قال مصعب ونسيت العاشرة إلا أن تكون المضمضة زاد قتيبة قال وكيع انتقاص الماء يعني الاستنجاء وحدثناه أبو كريب أخبرنا ابن أبي زائدة عن أبيه عن مصعب بن شيبة في هذا الإسناد مثله غير أنه قال قال أبوه ونسيت العاشرة
- 'A'ishah reported: the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said: Ten are the acts according to fitra: clipping the moustache, letting the beard grow, using the tooth-stick, snuffing up water in the nose, cutting the nails, washing the finger joints, plucking the hair under the armpits, shaving the pubes, and cleaning one's private parts with water. The narrator said: I have forgotten the tenth, but it may have been rinsing the mouth.[192]

There exist slight variations to this tradition. One *ḥadīth* narrated by Abu Hurayrah says: ". . . five are the acts of Fiṭra: circumcision, shaving the pubes, cutting the nails, plucking the hair under the armpits and clipping the moustache."[193] A time limit, in a similar tradition, gives Muslims a "forty night" grace-period to accomplish the "acts of Fiṭra".[194] Ibn 'Umar[195] records Islam's prophet ordering Muslims to keep their moustaches short and beards long; one purpose for this occurs in two different traditions:

---

[192]Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, 1:160, #502.

[193]Ibid., 1:159, #495. #496 is nearly identical except the order of the "acts of Fiṭra" is different.

[194]Ibid., 1:195, #497.

[195]Ibid., 1:159, #498. See also #499.

1) "to act against the polytheists" [خالفوا المشركين],[196] and 2) "to . . . act against the fire-worshippers".[197]

Ṣadīqī, commenting on the "ten acts according to fitrah," writes:

> Here fiṭra (lit. nature) stands for the Sunnah of the Apostles of Allah . . . The conduct of the Apostle is quite close to nature. Some of the commentators have explained this word by the religion of Islam, because it is given to man by the same Lord Who has created nature and thus there is a very close affinity between the two.[198]

Most early Islamic scholars define *fiṭrah* in similar fashion to Ṣadīqī. The majority of them thought *fiṭrah* in this tradition's context refers to the سنّة, or lifestyle, of Muḥammad (and the prophets). Those holding the minority opinion explain *fiṭrah* to mean "religion" (الدين).[199] A few of *fiṭrah's* "acts" also require ablution (وضوء) prior to a Muslim's prayer time—breathing water up the nose, washing the hands, rinsing the mouth—and thus, can be considered as "religion." The remaining seven, though, Muḥammad demonstrates in his life and are recorded in other traditions (السنن).[200] Also noteworthy is Ibn al-'Arabī's comment that the "acts" of *fiṭrah* are not restricted to ten, but could be thirty or more.[201]

As for the reason *why* Muḥammad issues the "acts" of *fiṭrah*, there seems to be three: 1) they give man the greatest dignity, 2) they avert sickness by ensuring cleanliness, and 3) they differentiate Muslims from non-Muslims. Ṣaḥīh Muslim and Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī either place the "acts" of *fiṭrah* under the title: "The Book of Clothing"

---

[196]Ibid., 1:159-60, #500.

[197]Ibid., 1:160, #501.

[198]Ibid., 1:159.

[199]Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj and Nawawī, *Sharh Al-Nawawi*, Kitab al-Taharah: 492.

[200]Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and Bukhārī, *Fath Al-Bari*, Kitab al-Libas: 350.

[201]Ibid.

(كتاب اللباس)[202] or the "The Book of Purification" (كتاب الطهارة). 'Asqalānī commenting on trimming one's moustache and lengthening the beard, writes that these two "acts" of *fiṭrah* share in a person's beauty (الزينة).

> First of all, the [many] *ḥadīths* (التراجم) relate to hair and what resembles it (شاكلها), secondly they relate to smelling good (التطيُب), thirdly to improving the appearance (بتحسين الصورة) and fourthly to keeping the proper image (التصاوير) because it [the hair] might get in the robe (قد تكون في الثياب).[203]

Fiṭrah's "acts" also honor and give dignity to man because:

> *Fiṭrah* is the original disposition, meaning: that the things ["acts" of *fiṭrah*] when one does them makes him distinguished by *fiṭrah* which Allah created (فطر) the worshippers with, and he [Allah] desires for them to have the best and most honorable characteristics (أكمل الصفات وأشرفها).[204]

Fiṭrah's "acts," secondly, remove filth (وسخ) and cleanse (تنظيف). Underneath long nails, around the mouth, in the nose, on the armpits and hands, or by the genitals, dirt, sweat, and filth collect. For example, prior to Islam in the Age of Ignorance (الجاهلية) "the Arabs did not wash their hands after eating; this caused filth, so he [Muḥammad] commanded for their washing."[205]

Finally, keeping the moustache short and the beard long distinguishes the Muslims' appearance from non-Muslims. Qur'anic revelations and Muḥammad's life purpose to distinguish between the pagan polytheists and submissive monotheists. Those who comply with these ten acts of *fiṭrah*, *look* like Muslims.

---

[202]Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, 1148, #5888-93.

[203]Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and Bukhārī, *Fath Al-Bari*, Kitab al-Libas: 347.

[204]Hikmat Fayyad Husayn Kazim, *Al-Fitrah Fi Al-Islam* (الفطرة في الاسلام) (Beirut, Lebanon: Daar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2008), 97.

[205]Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī and Bukhārī, *Fath Al-Bari*, Kitab al-Libas: 350.

Analysis. This tradition conveys how Muḥammad's visible life, his سنة, patterns *fiṭrah's* invisible nature. *Fiṭrah's* innumerable "acts" do not merely ceremonially cleanse Muslims in ablution (وضوء) for religious purposes, but also complement humanity's exalted design. Islam's prophet, then, models as *fiṭrah*'s prototype. Meaning, everything Muḥammad did, spoke, or wore, embodies *fiṭrah*'s essence. As a result, the prophet's life represents the utmost standard for man's dignity, human cleanliness, and religious distinction. This *ḥadīth* teaches far more about *fiṭrah* than mere personal hygiene. It aids in helping one grasp the enormous role *fiṭrah* plays in the Muslim's day-to-day life.

The word *fiṭrah* occurs only once in the Qur'an, but many times in the *ḥadīth* corpus. The Core *ḥadīth* teaches that *fiṭrah's* nature automatically inclines all children towards the knowledge of Allah. *Fiṭrah*, then, is every man's spiritual gravitation towards Allah. If born to Jewish or Christian parents, though, the child's non-Muslim upbringing corrupts his pure *fiṭrah*, remaining marred unless he confesses Islam. The Core *ḥadīth* remains consistent with another tradition discussing a man's *fiṭrah* at the time of his death. Children naturally move toward *tawḥīd* once born; and if upon reaching manhood they confess belief in Allah, in his prophet, and in the Qur'an on their deathbed, then their *fiṭrah* remains pure.

Fiṭrah is more than inner belief and verbal profession in Islam's core faith-tenets. Numerous traditions reveal that *fiṭrah's* inner nature produces certain outward behavior, such as drinking milk instead of wine, trimming the moustache, or shaving the armpits. Not making choices aligning with *fiṭrah's* divine trajectory eventually destroys a person's life. Acting in accordance to *fiṭrah's* monotheistic pull, though, vitalizes

dignity, promotes health, and differentiates true religion from false. *Fiṭrah's* nature from tradition builds upon its qur'anic meaning. The Qur'an teaches that Allah's *fiṭrah* in man leads him towards knowing Allah as Lord. Muḥammad's teachings from traditions further provide a more succinct picture about *fiṭrah's* specific spiritual content and behavior.

Defining *Fiṭrah* from Its Primary Writers over Islamic History

This study, up until this section, examined *fiṭrah's* etymological, qur'anic, and traditional origins. Studying *fiṭrah* thoroughly, however, requires one last approach, a historical one. For although *fiṭrah* finds its inauguration into the Arabic language starting in the Core *ḥadīth*, leading to its single qur'anic use; nonetheless, what also shapes *fiṭrah's* meaning are the Muslim scholars who write about it during Islam's first six centuries. This section strives to highlight *fiṭrah's* development and meaning from three prominent Muslim scholars.

Abu Al-Ḥasan Al-Ash'arī (d. 330 AH)

Al-Ash'arī, despite not representing one of Islam's four major theological schools,[206] in the third and fourth Islamic centuries, enjoys a large following. They are named the Ash'arites (الاشاعرة) and at least during Ash'arī's lifetime, aligned themselves closely to Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal's (AH 164-241) conservative teachings.[207] One of

---

[206]The four major Islamic theological schools are the: 1) Ḥanifites, 2) Mālikites, 3) Shāfi'ites, and 4) Ḥanbalites.

[207]Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, *Kitaab Al-Lam' Fi Al-Radd 'Ala Ahl Al-Zeegh Wa Al-Bida'*, ed. Hamuuda Gharaaba (London: Matba'at Misr Sharikat Hamrat Misr, 1955), 3.

Ash'arī's most significant literary works, *Maqālāt Al-Islāmiyyin Wa Ikhtilāf Al-Muṣallīn*, meticulously critiques the numerous religious differences (اختلافات) between the ten major Islamic sects[208] (and their schisms) that form following the prophet Muḥammad's death (AD 632). At the time Ash'arī writes *Maqālāt*, three chief issues attracting Muslim theologians' attention are: 1) التوحيد (oneness)—the attributes of Allah, 2) القرآن (the Qur'an)—created or uncreated, and 3) القدر (predeterminism)—does Allah control man's destiny or do humans have freewill?[209]

In the previous section Ṣaḥīh Muslim and Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī place *fiṭrah* within chapters relating to Allah's *qadar* and children's eternal destiny (e.g. Core *ḥadīth*). It should be no surprise, then, that Muslim leaders use *fiṭrah* as one of the theological weapons for proving their stance on قدر. Surprisingly, though, nowhere in Ash'arī's large two volume work, *Maqālāt*, does he specifically mention *fiṭrah*. Nonetheless, Ash'arī's massive work chronicles three subjects directly related to *fiṭrah's* sole qur'anic verse (Sūrat al-Rūm: 30) and Core *ḥadīth*. All three of these subjects interrelate to man's *qadar*, drawing out different facets. Thus, while Ash'arī refrains from explicitly mentioning *fiṭrah* in *Maqālāt*, its concept and etymological synonyms are overtly present.

Man's works created. *Fiṭrah's* etymological, qur'anic, and traditional meanings, as a whole, corporately allude to Allah placing within every human being *tawḥīd's* essence which intrinsically leads him to faith in Allah. If this is the case, then

---

[208]The Islamic sects are: 1) al-Shi', 2) al-Khawārij, 3) al-Murji'ah, 4) al-Mu'tazilah wa al-Jahmiyah, 5) al-Ḍarāriyah, 6) al-Ḥusayniyah, 7) al-Bakariyah, 8) al-'Āmah, 9) Aṣḥāb al-Ḥadīth, and 10) al-Kulābiyah.

[209]Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat* 2:257-83.

who actually controls man's actions or works? Does Allah or man create them? In addition, how might *fiṭrah's* presence in man affect Allah's *qadar*?

In *Kitāb Al-Lam'*'s fifth chapter dealing with *qadar*, Ash'arī poses a similar question to unspecified opponents promoting man's freewill. Ash'arī writes, "Why do you allege that the acquisitions (اكساب) of servants are created by Allah the exalted?"[210] "Acquisitions" and "works" (اعمال وافعال) are synonymous in *qadar*'s vernacular, and to answer this rhetorical question Ash'arī cites Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt: 96 where Abraham says, "But Allah has created you and your handiwork?" Allah creates everything man does; and for those who refute Ash'arī on this point, claiming that the one true God can never create evil, he directs them to the previous verse. Abraham in Sūrat al-Ṣāffāt: 95 asks his father's people, "Worship ye that which ye have (yourselves) carved?" The "handiwork" Allah creates, then, even pertains to man's idolatrous intentions, which in this case produces Abraham's father's idols for his people to worship. Ash'arī's point—Allah predestines man's works, all of them, good and evil.

Ash'arī is not alone in his view of *qadar*:

> Most of the Sunnis who said capacity (الاستطاعة) occurs at the time of the action like Al-Marīsī, Ibn 'Awn, the Najarites, the Ash'arites, the Jahmites, and sects from the Kharajites, Murja'ites, and Shī'ites believe that all the works of the servants are created. Allah created them.[211]

The Jahmites, whose leader is Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān, hold the most conservative views about *qadar*. Their extreme stance on pre-determinism is known as الجبرية الخالصة, meaning "pure fatalism" (literally "pure compulsion"). The Jahmites completely deny man's

---

[210]al-Ash'ari, *Kitaab Al-Lam' Fi Al-Radd 'Ala Ahl Al-Zeegh Wa Al-Bida'*, 69.

[211]Ibn Hazm, *Al-Fisal Fi Al-Milal Wa Al-Ahwa' Wa Al-Nihil* (الفصل في الملل والاهواء والنحل), ed. 'Abd al-Rahh Al-Jalifah (Azhar, Egypt: Maktabat Muhammad 'Ali Sabih, 1957), 32.

responsibility for the work he accomplishes. On the contrary, the Jahmites attribute to Allah man's every move, asserting that the "servant has no control whatsoever over (his) actions".[212]

There are other sects, Ash'arī writes, that believe in *qadar* but concede man plays some role in working out his destiny. For example, one of the many Shī'ah sects, the Rafiḍites (الرافضة), assert that Allah determines man's works. Hishām Ibn al-Ḥukm adds that while on one hand Allah controls man's actions, on the other hand, man also enjoys an element of choice (اختيار). Indeed, Allah controls and compels (اضطرار) man's actions; at the same time, however, man's collective intention acquires it (ارادها واكتسبها). In the end, though, the Rafiḍites consider Allah *the* impetus behind men's lives.[213]

Although *qadar* enjoys majority status among the early Islamic community, its antagonists affirming freewill (led by Wāṣil Ibn 'Aṭā') raise their objections. Ash'arī writes that Wāṣil Ibn 'Aṭā' opposes the consensus (الاجماع), and thus, "withdrew (اعتزل) from the Muslim community (الامة)." Consequently, the orthodox Islamic community label Wāṣil Ibn 'Aṭā' and his adherents, the "Mu'tazilites" (المعتزلة).[214] The Mu'tazilites oppose the pre-determinists (اصحاب القدر) who make God responsible for the good *and* evil in men's lives. Assigning evil to Allah transgresses God's justice, the Mu'tazilites claim. They reason: How can Allah justly sentence man to heaven or hell if he makes this decision resulting from the good and bad works which he himself creates and pre-

---

[212]Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal*, ed. Ahmad Fahmi Muhammad, 2nd ed. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992), 72-73.

[213]Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat* 1:110.

[214]al-Ash'ari, *Kitaab Al-Lam' Fi Al-Radd 'Ala Ahl Al-Zeegh Wa Al-Bida'*, 124.

determines?[215] For this reason, the Jabarites (الجبرية) refer to the Mu'tazilites as the Qadarites (القدرية), because they believe Allah endows man with the ability (القدرة) to control their own destiny.[216] In fact, some Mu'tazilites dare to say, Ash'arī writes, that the "meaning of the doer and the Creator (of an act) is one" (فزعم بعضهم انّ معنى فاعل وخالق واحد).[217]

Ash'arī surprisingly never mentions *fiṭrah* in his thorough survey of early Islamic history theological debates. Yet, concerning the subject regarding whether or not Allah or man controls his destiny (i.e. does man or Allah create people's works), Ash'arī instead uses one of *fiṭrah's* synonyms—طبع, or nature. Al-Ḥusayn Ibn Muḥammad, a Najarite leader holding to *qadar*, insists that Allah "stamps a man's heart" (طبع على قلبه). What does Ibn Muḥammad mean by this? A man named Barghūth answers, "the things birthed in man are the work of Allah in conformity with nature" (الاشياء المتولّدة فعل الله بايجاب الطبع). Allah imprinting his nature into man's being is similar to how Allah creates. When he forms a rock, he stamps the rock (طبع الحجر), and according to its nature (طبع), when the rock is thrown, it propels forward. Likewise, when Allah creates animals he impresses it with a particular nature so that it feels pain when struck or cut with something.[218]

---

[215]Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat* 1:273.

[216]Shahrastānī, *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal*, 38.

[217]Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat* 1:273.

[218]Ibid., 1:315-16.

The point one can make about Ash'arī's survey of Barghūth and Ibn Muḥammad's comments on Allah's works is that those Muslims holding to *qadar* (the Jabarites) claim that Allah, not man, creates man's acts. However, many of the Jabarites believe, though, that Allah infused these acts—good and bad—through the nature (طبع) he stamps (طبع) into man's being. In early Islamic history, then, this is one of the first ways in which Muslims grappled with *fiṭrah's* concept.

Man's knowledge of Allah. Ash'arī in *Maqālāt* provides solid insight into the method by which man ascertains his knowledge about God and what the Muslim community qualifies as faith. Earlier in this chapter, *fiṭrah's* etymological, qur'anic, and traditional meanings all recognize its special connection to Allah's creating and impressing into man divine DNA that inevitably leads one to knowing God. Ash'arī enters the reader into the first three centuries of this emerging topic called "النظر والقياس", which literally means "contemplation and deduction."

In particular, Ash'arī records the Rafiḍites' eight different views on the knowledge of God and whether or not a person attains it solely through النظر والقياس. Most Rafiḍites hold the first view that Ash'arī lists. Man's knowledge (معارف) of Allah, "all of it", Ash'arī writes, including creation in its entirety, is necessary or obligatory (اضطرارًا), and "contemplation and deduction do not lead to knowledge (علم), and Allah does not devote himself to his servants by them [النظر والقياس]."[219] Although Ash'arī refrains from mentioning anything resembling *fiṭrah* in this first view, one must wonder what medium Allah uses in man that prompts him to grasp God's existence.

Not all men, according to the Rafiḍites' second and third views, recognize Allah and know him. Adherents of Shayṭān al-Ṭāq and Abu Mālik al-Ḥaḍrī argue that Allah divides mankind into two halves—those people God gives *or* restricts his knowledge. With regards to this view, it appears that Allah predetermines man's eternal destiny from birth. One person might have the ability to know Allah while another God denies this privilege. The next view Ash'arī lists reflects previously covered concepts about *fiṭrah*. Hishām Ibn al-Ḥukm and his followers affirm man knows God by necessity (اضطرارًا), but in this fourth view man's knowledge of Allah is in accordance with the nature (بالايجاب الخلقة). Ibn al-Ḥukm states that "الخلقة," one of *fiṭrah's* synonyms, entrenches itself within man's nature intrinsically giving him knowledge about God. Furthermore, Ibn al-Ḥukm explains that man's divine knowledge lies latent until he actively contemplates creation (النظر والاستدلال العلم بالله).[220]

This next Rāfiḍite view in some way mirrors those of the Mu'tazilites. One of their leaders, al-Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, writes that some Mu'tazilites believe people attain the knowledge of God through "inspiration" or "instinct" (الهامًا). "النظر," in other words, is not necessary whatsoever (لا يوجبون النظر البتة) to know Allah because he pre-programs this knowledge into man before he is born. While some men instinctively acquire knowledge about God, other Mu'tazilites assert awareness of Allah comes only through contemplation (النظر).[221] It seems that both orthodox (e.g. the Rāfiḍites) and unorthodox

---

[219]Ibid., 1:118.

[220]Ibid.

[221]'Abd Al-Jabbar Ibn Ahmad, *Sharh Al-Asul Al-Khamsah* (شرح الاصول الخمسة), ed. 'Abd Al-Karim 'Uthman, 3rd ed. (Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat Wahibah, 1996), 66-67.

Islam alike (e.g. the Mu'tazilites) conduct similar debate regarding *how* man grasps awareness and knowledge about God. The *conclusions* they later make concerning how this knowledge links to man's nature, though, is what divides them.

The Rāfiḍites' fifth view lacks mention of النظر. Instead, one either gains the knowledge of God by compulsion (i.e. instinctively through nature) or by acquisition (كسبًا). Ash'arī, in the sixth view, highlights the time in history God begins sending prophets to teach mankind, and how this new era changes the way some Rāfiḍites view man receiving the knowledge of God. Those who believe that the avenue by which man attains God's knowledge shifts at the prophets' coming cite Sūrat al-Isrā': 15 which says, ". . . We do not punish until We have sent a messenger (to warn)" (وما كنا معذّبين حتى نبعث رسولًا). Before Allah sends his messengers, "contemplation and deduction" qualifies to give one the knowledge of God, for the clear path was unavailable. Thus, after the prophets' arrival, it was contingent upon man to use his intellect (عقل) and listen to their message in order to achieve the knowledge of God. On the contrary, the seventh view states that before and after Allah sends his messengers "the mind was a competent authority to know *tawḥīd*" (وانّ العقول حجّة في التوحيد). The final view Ash'arī lists actually counters the previous seven and equally brings to light Shī'ite theology.[222] This group of Rāfiḍites claim,

> The mind does not lead (man) to anything, before or after the messengers' coming; nothing is known about religion, and no religious duty is required except by the statements of the messengers and imams, and the imām is the competent authority after the messenger (Muḥammad).[223]

---

[222]Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat* 1:118-19.

[223]Ibid., 1:119.

The last quote provides insight into Islam's first three centuries, highlighting what occupied Muslim theologians' minds. Questions such as: what ability does man's intellect have in knowing Allah; or once God began sending his messengers, did this change the way man receives knowledge about Allah; and lastly, does man's nature automatically lead him to Allah or must one contemplate nature and make right deductions in order to know him? These are just a few questions the early Muslim community was asking regarding matters relating to faith; and because Allah in the Qur'an and *ḥadīth* creates man with *fiṭrah*, over time its concept gradually enters the theological and philosophical forefront.

Man's fate at birth. Ash'arī in *Maqālāt* provides continuous commentary about what different groups decide regarding the fate of Muslim or non-Muslim children when they die—Are they believers? Do they go to heaven or hell? From what Ash'arī writes about this topic in *Maqālāt*, these questions concerning children's fate occupy the early Islamic community's attention. Once again, though, Ash'arī fails to use the word "*fiṭrah*" when depicting the various Islamic sects' views on this topic. This indicates that although what Ash'arī writes about children's fate relates directly to *fiṭrah*, its concept remains in its early developmental stages.

This being said, though, in *Kitāb al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, which dates at least one century earlier than Ash'arī's *Maqālāt*, Abu Ḥanīfah (the leader of the earliest Sunnī theological school) comments about *fiṭrah* from Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 and the Core *ḥadīth*. Abu Ḥanīfah, first of all, establishes *fiṭrah* upon the aforementioned pre-existential covenant found in Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172. Abu Ḥanīfah likens this ahistoric pact between Allah and Adam's descendants to man's "covenantal faith" (الايمان الميثاقي) which he also

refers to as man's "first *fiṭrah*" (الفطرة الاولى), "original religion" (الدين الاصلي), and "granted *fiṭrī* faith" (الايمان الفطري الوهبي).[224] Abu Ḥanīfah invents these terms for *fiṭrah* in his desire to answer the question—Do children go to "the fire" (النار), or to hell, when they die? Abu Ḥanīfah states that God pardons two types of children when they die: 1) mentally handicapped children unable to articulate their faith (or disbelief), and 2) children that did not believe anything contrary to Islam.

With adults, Abu Ḥanīfah sets different criteria. God considers mentally mature people as believers, Abu Ḥanīfah writes, whenever they *verbally* profess Islam. Abu Ḥanīfah further states that an adult's oral assent to Islam's tenets is a "copy" (نسخة) of his "first *fiṭrah*" and "original religion." Whoever substitutes and changes (بدّل وغيّر) his "granted *fiṭrī* (فطري) faith" by choosing to believe in anything other than Islam, however, the Ḥanifites place in the category of the "people of the fire."[225]

More than one hundred years following Abu Ḥanīfah's passing, Ash'arī records the debates occurring in the Islamic community about where children go after they die. The question that the early Muslim community attempts to answer, Ash'arī phrases: "Do children suffer (عذاب) in the afterlife or not?" Whatever their responses, due to Abu Ḥanīfah's prior work on this subject, one can be confident that to some extent they grapple with *fiṭrah's* meaning from Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 and the Core *ḥadīth*.

One group of Rāfiḍites answers "yes," it is permissible for Allah to torment children in hell, though he could also send them to *jannah*. Another, and larger Rāfiḍite

---

[224]Abu Ḥanīfah al-Na'mān Ibn Thābit, *Kitab Al-Fiqh Al-Akbar* (كتاب الفقه الاكبر), ed. Al-Hamam Nasir (Egypt: Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah al-Kubra, 1937), 45.

[225]Ibid.

group, responds "no." They insist that "It is not permissible for Allah to torment children, because they are in heaven." When other Islamic sects ask the Rāfiḍites about the suffering children might endure in the world, they answer in three different ways: 1) their suffering is from Allah in accordance with their nature (الخلقة) "because Allah creates them with a nature (to suffer) . . . [for example] when they are cut or hit;" 2) their suffering is ultimately from Allah, not from their nature, but rather from something originating in them (باختراع ذلك فيهم); and 3) (including the Imāmites and the Mu'tazilites) some of their suffering is due to Allah's handiwork, but not all of it. Meaning, the pain children endure which Allah does not initiate occurs as a result of what other people inflict upon them.[226]

One of the Kharijite sects, the al-Azāraqah, believe that non-Muslim children go to hell when they die and that God judges Muslim and non-Muslim children according to the religion of their fathers (in matters relating to inheritance).[227] Ibn Ḥazm provides greater detail into Ash'arī's account of the al-Azāraqah. According to Ibn Ḥazm, the al-Azāraqah reference Sūrat Nūḥ: 26-27 when defending their harsh sentence upon polytheistic children. Al-Azāraqah state that Nūh (Noah) in these two verses requests that Allah "leave not even one of the disbelievers in the land." Noah's motive for wanting God to wipe out all unbelievers, al-Azāraqah claims, was not evil, but rather praiseworthy. Al-Azāraqah explain that if the مشركين remain in Muslim lands, then they

---

[226]Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat* 1:121-22.

[227]Ibid., 1:162.

and their unbelieving children, when they grow up, will cause many Muslims to go astray. Therefore, this is why Allah sends polytheistic children to hell.

Ibn Ḥazm, though, disagrees with Al-Azāraqah's harsh sentence against polytheistic children. Ibn Ḥazm argues that some of Muḥammad's most superior Companions, like 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and Khadījah, were children of polytheists. Moreover, the great prophet Ibrāhīm comes from a polytheistic background. Thus, Ibn Ḥazm reasons, why would it be logical for God to send polytheistic children to hell? Finally, Ibn Ḥazm reasons that Noah in Sūrat Nūḥ: 26 directs his words solely towards that generation's unbelievers.[228]

Ash'arī writes that the al-'Ajāradah, another Kharijite sect, believe that adult Muslims should not call children to Islam until they mature. Before Muslim and non-Muslim children grow up, though, the al-'Ajāradah consider children blameless and innocent (البراءة), not worthy of going to hell.[229] This last point is contrary to some members of the al-Ibādiyah who agree that polytheistic children actually do suffer in the afterlife. They don't suffer as a result of God's vengeance upon their bad deeds, however, but simply because Allah has power over all things—to permit them to suffer or enter them into *jannah*.[230] Al-Wāqifah, another sect, approaches this subject quite differently. They allege that children of Muslim parents are believers and remain in this

---

[228]Hazm, *Al-Fisal Fi Al-Milal*, 4:61.

[229]Al-Ash'ari, *Maqalat* 1:164.

[230]Ibid., 1:175-76.

condition until they disbelieve. Unbelieving parents' children, though, Muslims declare unbelievers until they believe.[231]

Ash'arī analysis. Ash'arī does a solid job annotating in *Maqālāt* the main theological topics Muslim theologians chose to debate during Islamic history's first three centuries. Three topics in particular relate to *fiṭrah*—1) man's works; 2) man's knowledge of Allah; and 3) man's eternal destiny at birth. Regardless of the differences between the Islamic sects on these three issues, Ash'arī's historical data proves numerous Muslims actively involve themselves in discussions associated with *fiṭrah* and its divine connection to God. Most Muslims believe before and during Ash'arī's generation that Allah determines man's eternal destiny and even stamps (طبع) man's heart with a nature (طبع). As a result, some early Muslims assert that man's nature affects *qadar* which sways their decision about whether or not Allah creates man's works.

Ash'arī's information further highlights the many Islamic sects' beliefs that man's knowledge about God originates inside of him, out of compulsion. Other sects link this inherent knowledge about God to man's nature (الخلقة). Thirdly, Ash'arī's work shows how the topic of children's fate—Muslim or non-Muslim—concerns the early Islamic community; and for many Islamic sects, a child's eternal destiny remains dependent upon the nature Allah gives him at birth. Also from Ash'arī's data, many from the early Islamic community deem children innocent, claiming that they are not deserving of God's punishment. They regard *jannah* an appropriate place for Muslim and non-

---

[231]Ibid., 1:180.

Muslim children; and it was their *nature* at birth, خلقة or *fiṭrah*, which significantly impacts their thinking.

Abu Ḥāmid Muḥammad Al-Ghazālī (d. 505 AH/1111)

The early Muslim community knew about *fiṭrah* from the Core *ḥadīth* and its single qur'anic use. *Fiṭrah's* concept, as Ash'arī's *Maqālāt* demonstrates, continues in rudimentary form, remaining undeveloped until philosophers, such as al-Fārābī (d. 339 AH/950AD) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 428AH/1037AD) advance its idea further. Ghazālī's writings not only dovetail but also expand their works on *fiṭrah*;[232] and despite Ghazālī's substantial academic contribution to *fiṭrah's* concept, his *personal* quest to know truth is what inspires him to study it.

Personal quest. Ghazālī, from the time he was a young boy, yearns for truth; and he grows up in a society where Jews, Christians, and Muslims segregate themselves due to their divergent theological views. Ghazālī writes in *Deliverance From Error*:

> You should first of all know—God give you good guidance and gently lead you to truth!—that the diversity of men in religions and creeds, plus the disagreement of the Community of Islam about doctrines, given the multiplicity of sects and the divergency of methods, is a deep sea in which most men flounder and from which few only are saved.[233]

The dilemma Ghazālī finds himself in both frustrates and haunts him. Everyone assumes their version of truth saves. This predicament counters Ghazālī's logic and thus, prompts him to scrutinize "the creed of every sect and to lay bare the secrets of each faction's

---

[232]Griffel, "Al-Ghazālī's Use of "Original Human Disposition" (Fiṭra) and Its Background in the Teachings of Al-Fārābī and Avicenna," 2, 8-9.

[233]Al-Ghazali, *Deliverance from Error*, 54.

teaching with the aim of discriminating between the proponent of truth and the advocate of error . . ."[234]

Ghazālī's personal vendetta, though, does not satiate his ambition to decipher truth from error. Instead it is prophet Muḥammad's prophecies about *fiṭrah* which change Ghazālī's methodology. Rather than continue with comparing and contrasting each sect's doctrine, Ghazālī modifies his search for truth by studying man's basic structural foundation. Ghazālī writes:

> The thirst for grasping the real meaning of things was indeed my habit and wont from my early years and in the prime of my life. It was an instinctive, natural disposition placed in my makeup by God Most High, not something due to my own choosing and contriving. As a result, the fetters of servile conformism fell away from me, and inherited beliefs lost their hold on me, when I was still quite young. For I saw that the children of Christians always grew up embracing Christianity, and the children of Jews always grew up adhering to Judaism, and the children of Muslims always grew up following the religion of Islam. I also heard the tradition related from the Apostle of God—God's blessing and peace be upon him!—in which he said: 'Every infant is born endowed with the fitra: then his parents make him Jew or Christian or Magian.' Consequently I felt an inner urge to seek the true meaning of the original fiṭra, and the true meaning of the beliefs arising through slavish aping of parents and teachers. I wanted to sift out these uncritical beliefs, the beginnings of which are suggestions imposed from without, since there are differences of opinion in the discernment of those that are true from those that are false.[235]

Even in this heartfelt quote where Ghazālī expresses the desire to rid himself of all reasonable facsimiles masquerading as truth, he still manages to disclose innovative thoughts about *fiṭrah*. With Ghazālī, *fiṭrah* exits the polemic discussions of Ash'arī's era and enters into the arena of pragmatism. *Fiṭrah*, Ghazālī realizes, starting in the "early years" of his life, prods him towards knowing the "real meaning of things." This supernatural nudge that was "placed in [his] makeup by God Most High", Ghazālī identifies as *fiṭrah*.

---

[234]Ibid.

[235]Ibid., 54-55.

The comment Ghazālī makes about "inherited beliefs" is also noteworthy. Contrary to previous commentary about the Core *ḥadith* which teaches that non-Muslim parents through their child-raising corrupt their infant's *fiṭrah*, Ghazālī equally denounces his Muslim upbringing. Whether Jewish, Christian, Magian, or even Muslim parental rearing, Ghazālī rejects it, calling it "slavish aping" and determines to "sift through it" so that he can arrive at pure and unadulterated "beliefs" originating with *fiṭrah*. The "uncritical" knowledge that *fiṭrah* produces, Ghazālī writes, is "certain knowledge;" and the human mind is unable to doubt it.[236]

The noble intellect. The "Intellect is the source and fountain head of knowledge as well as its foundation", and for this reason Ghazālī in *The Book of Knowledge* writes that its "nature" is "noble."[237] In an unidentified *ḥadīth*, Ghazālī explains how the prophet Muḥammad teaches that disobedience is due to man's ignorance, while obedience, to his intelligence.[238] "Light" (نور), Ghazālī writes, represents Allah's guidance through the Qur'an and "the faith" (Sūrat al-Shūrá: 52).[239] Allah desires men to move from darkness into the light. The intellect is key to this process; and to Ghazālī man's weak intellect yields poor "worship," which in turn results in man's punishment in hell.[240]

---

[236]Ibid., 55.

[237]Al-Ghazali, *The Book of Knowledge: Kitab Al-'ilm*, 221.

[238]Ibid., 222.

[239]Ibid.

[240]Ibid., 222-23.

The "noble" intellect to Ghazālī is complex, encompassing four unique definitions:[241] 1) understanding knowledge, 2) necessary knowledge, 3) learned knowledge, and 4) veteran knowledge. Quite simply, the component separating men from animals, Ghazālī writes, delineates the intellect's first definition from the others. Allah creates man with Understanding Knowledge permitting him to "instinctively" understand the "theoretical sciences" (نظرية) and "abstract disciplines" (فكرية). Animals are unable to critically think in this way, but by "instinct," man is able. In the intellect there also resides Necessary Knowledge by which man "discerns the possibility of possible things (جائزات) and the impossibility of impossible things (مستحيلات)." Learned Knowledge is the opposite of Necessary Knowledge. Meaning, whatever man learns through experience, this is Learned Knowledge. The last category of intellect, Veteran Knowledge, gives man the "power" to foreshadow the outcome of his mental intentions, and then as a result, either act upon them or refrain. This type of intellect develops within man through much time and repetition.

According to Ghazālī, Understanding Knowledge, which occurs in man instinctively (بالغريزة), is the source of the other three. All of them, however, Ghazālī enjoins (مضمنة) to *fiṭrah*.[242] It is as if Allah implants man's entire intellectual life-potential inside of man's *fiṭrah* which only needs "some cause" to draw it out. Ghazālī writes that his concept of *fiṭrah* is analogous to the imperceptible water hidden deep down in the earth that collects in a well only after digging for it, or to the oil excreted

---

[241]Ibid., 226-28.

[242]Ibid., 229.

from an almond after it is squeezed. In these two analogies the water and oil already exist, Ghazālī writes, but they just need the *cause* for their kinetic appearance.[243]

Ghazālī inserts the noble intellect's potentiality into man's nature, or *fiṭrah*. From his standpoint, Allah downloads *fiṭrah's* substance into all men during the pre-existential covenant that he makes with Adam's progeny (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172). Mankind confesses Allah as Lord in this pre-existential covenant, however, *non*-verbally. Instead, it is people's pre-incarnate souls admitting Allah's lordship, Ghazālī writes; hence, they have no excuse on earth or during God's final judgment for their lack of faith. The "water" or "oil" dormant in man's *fiṭrah*, consequently, equals belief in Allah. As a result, Ghazālī exposits "according to the pattern (*fiṭrah*) on which He (Allah) has made mankind" (Sūrat al-Rūm: 30), to mean that ". . . every human being is created and born a believer; still more, every human being is born with [an inherent] knowledge of reality."[244] Despite Allah inscribing faith into man's nature, Ghazālī splits mankind into two groups: believers and unbelievers. The former successfully *remembers* "a picture which is inherent in one's mind by nature (*fiṭrah*)"; but the latter, however, fails to recall it.[245]

Certain knowledge. Ghazālī is a brilliant philosopher; but up until this point the discussion fails to fully display his philosophical development of *fiṭrah*. This section endeavors to emphasize *fiṭrah's* intricate interworking within man's intellect that Ghazālī

---

[243]Ibid., 229-30.

[244]Ibid., 230.

[245]Ibid., 230-31.

helps pioneer from Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā's writings. Specifically, this section examines *fiṭrah's* initial state in man and its contribution to man's attaining Certain Knowledge.

When children first enter into the world at birth, "man's essence, in his original condition, is created in blank simplicity, without any information about the 'worlds' of God Most High."[246] This, Ghazālī writes, describes the world of "existing things." Until a child reaches the approximate age of seven years old, Ghazālī writes, he remains within the world of "sensibles" where he incrementally cultivates the senses—first touch, then sight, next hearing, and finally, taste. After apprehending the senses, Allah forms the "noble" intellect "so that he perceives the necessary, the possible, the impossible, and things not found in the previous stages" (i.e. the senses).[247] The intellect is where *fiṭrah* abides.

The multidimensional intellect, as previously mentioned, encompasses *fiṭrah's* realm. At this developmental stage, Fārābī writes, "the soul embarks to know (يعلم), or think (يفكّر), or imagine (يتصوّر), or conceive (يتخيّل), or understand (يتعقّل), everything prepared for him (man) by *fiṭrah*."[248] Even though a child can feel, touch, hear, and see, fiṭrah's knowledge differs from sensory knowledge, because it is instinctive (غريزي) and necessary (ضروري). *Fiṭrah* comes from within, Ibn Sīnā writes, detaching itself from the senses.[249] According to Fārābī, *fiṭrah* powers a child's first decisions. Moreover, "man is

---

[246]Al-Ghazali, *Deliverance from Error*, 83.

[247]Al-Ghazali, *The Book of Knowledge: Kitab Al-'ilm*, 83.

[248]Abu Nasr Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Farabi, *Al-Farabi's Book of Letters (كتاب الحروف): Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Mashreq Publishers, 1969), 135.

[249]Abu 'Ali Ibn Sina, *Kitab Al-Najat: Fi Al-Hikmah Al-Mantiqiyyah Wa Al-Tabi'iyyah Wa Al-*

created with" (يُفطر على) certain willful acts interwoven into man's *fiṭrah* that seem easier for him to accomplish than others. For example, whatever activities children are naturally predisposed to, Fārābī would say their intellectual source comes from *fiṭrah*.[250]

Apart from Ghazālī's philosophical studies about *fiṭrah's* foundational role in a child's maturing intellect, his most scrupulous account depicting *fiṭrah* comes in a section from the third chapter of *Mihakk al-Nathar Fi Al-Mantiq* titled, "The Second Section on Certain Knowledge and Belief".[251] At an early age Ghazālī searches for the true meaning of things. His journey leads him to man's Islamic foundation, or *fiṭrah*, in which the intellect subsists. Ghazālī realizes that Jews, Christians, and Muslims all profess their beliefs to be true; but he questions how one can be certain.

Ghazālī's answer—one must practice sound قياس, or deductive reasoning. He deliberates that when a man builds a house, its architectural soundness depends upon the structural integrity and precise measuring of the foundation, walls, ceiling, etc. In reality, though, because the house's most basic building materials *form* the foundation, walls, and ceiling, then it is "the brick, clay, and then the preparation of the individual [materials] such as the water, dirt, and the [house's] blueprint"[252] that should really concern the builder. The same principle holds true in قياس, Ghazālī writes. One might suppose certain information from thinking to be true; however, in order to know its soundness and

---

Ilahiyyah (كتاب النجاة: في الحكمة المنطقية والطبعية والالهية), ed. Majid Fakhrī (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadidah, 1985), 44.

[250]Al-Farabi, *Book of Letters*, 97-100.

[251]Al-Ghazali, *Mihakk Al-Nathar Fi Al-Mantiq*, 57.

[252]Ibid., 11-12.

integrity, he must test his قياس. Ghazali's test results lead to what he calls the مقدّمات, or "introductory things."[253] The "Introductory Things" comprise man's intellectual "blueprint," which Ghazālī explains derive their source from *fiṭrah*. Therefore, in Ghazālī's mind, man's search for the true meaning of things begins with *fiṭrah* allotting every human being the same intellectual Introductory Things to build his life upon. Ghazālī's inquiry into how man acquires Certain Knowledge provides greater detail into *fiṭrah's* content in the Introductory Things.

There are seven factors, Ghazālī writes, a person must investigate when determining whether or not a thought he obtains can be considered "certain" (يقين) or merely a "belief which he supposes to be certain."[254] This section limits Ghazali's discussion to those specific factors relating to *fiṭrah*. They are: the first factor—the first things; the sixth factor—the conjectures, and the seventh factor—the commonly known things.

The First Things (اوّليات) comprise man's thoughts which automatically, naturally, and spontaneously incite the intellect into action.[255] Ghazālī explains that the intellect obtains the First Things:

> . . . without seeking help from the senses . . . like man's knowledge of himself, that one cannot both be eternal and originated, that two contrary things, if one is true the other is false, that two is more than one, and similar things to this. As a whole, these cases coincide regulated in the intellect since his (man's) existence where even one rationally supposes he has always known these things, but he does not know when this occurred . . .[256]

---

[253]Ibid., 12.

[254]Ibid., 57.

[255]Ibid.

[256]Ibid., 58.

Before a person can be certain about a thought, he needs to have thoughts. The information which the intellect spontaneously produces, occurring *apart* from the senses and coinciding with blatant logic, these types of intellectual activity are Ghazālī's First Things; and First Things simply delineate *fiṭrah*'s content. Fārābī, in *Risālah Fi-l-'Aql*, defines Ghazālī's First Things, First Knowledge (المعرفة الاولى). First Knowledge Fārābī writes is:

> The power of the soul by which it obtains certainty for man by the necessary, trustworthy, and universal introductory things; not originally [originating] from deductive reasoning (قياس) or from thought, but by *fiṭrah* and the nature (الطبع), or by his [natural] inclination . . . from where he cannot sense where and how it happened. Indeed, this power is a part of the soul [whereby] First Knowledge is obtained.[257]

Fārābī and Ghazālī clarify from their quotes that inside man's "nature," or "*fiṭrah*," resides universal knowledge. This resultant knowledge comes from above, not below. Man cannot take credit for these thoughts. The *fiṭrah* that Allah endows him with in the pre-existential covenant, fuels them.

Ghazālī further develops *fiṭrah*'s concept in the sixth factor, The Conjectures (الوهميات). According to Ghazālī, man's knowledge resulting from *fiṭrah*, or the First Things, initially cannot be trusted. Consequently, Ghazālī explains that among the First Things exist the Conjectures. Furthermore, he adds that some First Things are "definitive" (الاوليات القاطعية) while others are false. "Not all that *fiṭrah* testifies to as definitive is true," Ghazālī writes. Continuously presiding in man's mind, then, are three types of thoughts: First Things that are true; First Things that are false; and The

---

[257]Abu Nasr Muhammad Bin Muhammad Al-Farabi, *Alfarabi Risalat Fi-L-'Aql* (الفارابي رسالة في العقل), ed. S.J. Maurice Bouyges (Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1938), 8-9.

Conjectures.[258] Ibn Sīnā, one of the primary philosophers that Ghazālī studies, in his work *Kitāb al-Najat*, explains the differences between them.

The Conjectures, unlike the First Things, are thoughts resulting from the senses (المحسوسات), and are either true (صادقة) or false (كاذبة). Ibn Sīnā writes that "The Conjectures are very strong in the mind and the useless ones (الباطل منها) are [eventually] abolished by the intellect . . ."[259] However, at the beginning of the thought process man is unable to distinguish them from *fiṭrah*'s witness and the First Things. Later in Ibn Sīnā's comparison between *fiṭrah* and The Conjectures, he actually gives *fiṭrah* a new name: the *fiṭrah* of Conjecture (فطرة الوهم) and the *fiṭrah* of Intellect (فطرة العقل). The *fiṭrah* of Conjecture are false and can be tested in two ways. If at any moment a person doubts one of his thoughts, it cannot generate from *fiṭrah*; and this is the first way. Secondly, whenever man's initial thoughts are exposed to the senses and the sensory experience contradicts the intellect's deduction, then the *fiṭrah* of Conjecture again cannot be trusted. It is therefore false.[260] With *fiṭrah* of the Intellect, the opposite is true. Man never doubts these thoughts while the senses and intellect's appraisal are in harmony.

The seventh factor aiding man's ability to distinguish between certain knowledge from mere supposition is what Ghazālī names the Commonly Known Things (المشهورات). Whatever beliefs the masses, the majority, or prominent people commonly hold as *good* in a society, these are the Commonly Known Things. One notable point

---

[258]Al-Ghazali, *Mihakk Al-Nathar Fi Al-Mantiq*, 62-63.

[259]Ibn Sina, *Kitab Al-Najat*, 98-99.

[260]Ibid., 99.

Ghazālī develops in discussing the Commonly Known Things deals with his statements about *fiṭrah* and morality. Morality obliges people to live by particular standards which categorize human behavior as either right or wrong. "Always be kind" or "Lying is bad," are two examples of moral statements. Ghazālī also writes that the Introductory Things (which the First Things belong to) are what the Commonly Known Things build upon in a person's قياس. Therefore, the Commonly Known Things are not part of *fiṭrah* for two reasons: 1) society's morals originate from man's beliefs, and 2) *fiṭrah* constructs the platform for the Commonly Known Things' establishment. Ghazālī about these two points writes,

> . . . these cases [moral statements] are not First (اولية) or Conjecture (وهمية). Indeed, the first *fiṭrah* (الفطرة الاولى) does not judge by them, but their acceptance is planted in the soul for many reasons which [one] is exposed to from a young boy; and that by repeating it to the young boy and commanding him (تكليفه) . . .[261]

It is clear Ghazālī relies heavily upon Ibn Sīnā's work in *Kitāb al-Najat* because Ghazālī's thoughts nearly echo his. Apart from Ibn Sīnā's Arabic word for the Commonly Known Things (Ibn Sīnā uses الذائعات instead of المشهورات), his definition parallels Ghazālī's, revolving around *fiṭrah*.

> The Commonly Known Things are not . . . [the way] belief [in something] happens [like] in *fiṭrah*. Indeed, what is from the Commonly Known Things is not firstly rational or Conjecture, and truly they are not from *fiṭrah* (فطرية). However, they are repeated in the souls [of people] because the habit continues with them since youth . . . if you want to know the difference between the Commonly Known and what is from *fiṭrah* (فطري), propose the statement "Justice is beautiful and lying is detestable" to (your) *fiṭrah* . . . you will find doubt rising up in them [the two moral statements] . . .[262]

Like Ghazālī, Ibn Sīnā divorces doubt from the intellect's thoughts produced by *fiṭrah*. Furthermore, man acquires the Commonly Known Things at a young age which are then

---

[261]Al-Ghazali, *Mihakk Al-Nathar Fi Al-Mantiq*, 65-66.

[262]Ibn Sina, *Kitab Al-Najat*, 100.

indelibly marked upon man's intellect through constant repetition. *fiṭrah's* knowledge, though, occurs spontaneously from the depths of man's intellectual being. No secondary influences whatsoever—sensory or rational—impact *fiṭrah's* role in man.

Al-Ghazālī analysis. Ghazālī's development of *fiṭrah* somewhat encapsulates his personal journey to know Allah. Endeavoring to know truth and the "real meaning of things," Ghazālī's understanding of *fiṭrah* is both theological and philosophical. *Fiṭrah's* nature to Ghazālī, first of all, avoids religious affiliation. Its nature is not Jewish, Christian, nor even Islamic. God, rather, places *fiṭrah* into man which in turn prompts people toward true faith. Thus, *fiṭrah's* operational realm resides in the intellect which the Qur'an exalts. Men choosing to use their intellect obey Allah's word, while the ignorant go to hell.

Ghazālī distances himself from describing *fiṭrah's* essence as Islam, yet he does ground it in *tawḥīd*. When Allah evokes mankind's confession in him as Lord in the pre-existential covenant (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172), he implants faith into men's souls. Faith's essence is Ghazali's theological depiction of *fiṭrah*, and because of this men are born believers in one true God. Those who remember their covenantal "picture" of faith listen to *fiṭrah's* guidance which leads them to Islam.

Philosophically, *fiṭrah's* essence emerges as Ghazālī delineates sound intellectual reasoning; specifically, the steps that the intellect goes through as it determines belief from supposition. From Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and most importantly Ghazālī's work on this subject, a clearer image of *fiṭrah* materializes. A person's *fiṭrah* fails to activate within the intellect until around seven years old. Up until this age the

senses develop. Following this maturation point, *fiṭrah* spontaneously nudges man's soul to "know," "think," "imagine," "conceive," and "understand" life's meaning.

More specifically, *fiṭrah* generates the First Things in man's intellect. Without any sensory or rational input, *fiṭrah* instinctively knows blatant logic—two is greater than one, something cannot be both eternal and originated, etc. The Conjectures and the Commonly Known Things disguise themselves to the intellect as *fiṭrah's* product—in general, the Introductory Things, but more specifically, the First Things. However, Ghazālī emphasizes that the intellect never doubts *fiṭrah's* thoughts. Moreover, only those thoughts by *fiṭrah* which agree with the intellect's reasoning are true and trustworthy.

In the end, Ghazālī's research seems to indicate that *fiṭrah's* origin returns to Allah. Its essence is *tawḥīd*, or faith in one God, but not Islam. After a child is born, *fiṭrah's* essence ensures man's reasoning is sound. Those First Things, which *fiṭrah* prompts, naturally harmonize with man's intellect. If a person makes the effort to remember his faith, the intellect will agree with the Qur'an's teachings. As this happens, he becomes a Muslim.

Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328)

Ibn Taymiyyah's interest in *fiṭrah* is similar to Ash'arī's—to defend Allah's *qadar*. The conflict between Mu'tazilite and traditional thinking during Ibn Taymiyyah's era—freewill vs. deterministic—was strong. Fortunately, Ibn Taymiyyah provides one of the most lengthy and influential Islamic accounts of *fiṭrah* in *Dar' Ta'āruḍ Al-'Aql Wa Al-Naql* (*The Preventing of Contradiction Between Reason and Revelation*). His most faithful disciple, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751AH/1350AD), in *Shifā Al-'Alīl Fī*

Masā'il Al-Qaḍā' Wa Al-Qadar Wa Al-Ḥikmah Wa Al-Ta'līl (*Healing The Person With Wrong Concepts About Predetermination and Causality*) virtually replicates Ibn Taymiyyah's thoughts on *fiṭrah*, albeit more refined.[263] Jawziyyah designates an entire chapter[264] about *fiṭrah* in his work helping again to accurately frame the Islamic community's perception about it at that time. He titles the chapter "About the Mentioning of First *Fiṭrah*, Its Meaning and the Differences of the People in What it Means, and That It [*fiṭrah*] Does Not Contradict Al-Qaḍā' wa Al-Qadar About Misery and Going Astray". Clearly, from this title, even seven centuries after the prophet Muḥammad's passing, *fiṭrah's* link to *qadar* promotes theological debate, while *fiṭrah's* meaning demands increased clarity.

Ibn Taymiyyah arranges *Dar' Ta'āruḍ* much like Ash'arī's *Maqālāt*—whatever theological differences Muslims have at that time (or earlier) about *fiṭrah*, he mentions them and then adds personal commentary. Despite the abundant views Ibn Taymiyyah references from other leading Muslims about *fiṭrah*, this section concentrates primarily on his views alone. In particular, the following subsections discuss Ibn Taymiyyah's views about *fiṭrah*, *fiṭrah's* connection to *qadar*, the knowledge of God, and حنيفًا. Also, the last subsection reviews Ibn Taymiyyah's Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 exposition.

---

[263]Livnat Holtzman, *"Human Choice, Divine Guidance and the Fitra Tradition: The Use of Hadith in Theological Treatises by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya," in Ibn Taymiyya and His Times*, ed. Shahab Ahmed and Yossef Rapoport (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2010), 164-66.

[264]Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Shifa' Al-'alil Fī Masa'il Al-Qada' Wa-Al-Qadar Wa-Al-Hikmah Wa-Al-Ta'lil (شفاء العليل في مسائل القضاء والقدر والحكمة والتعليل)*, ed. al-Hassani Hasan 'Abd Allah (Egypt: Dar al-Turath, 1975), 559-00.

Qadar. The Mu'tazilites oppose the majority Islamic belief that Allah controls man's destiny (قدر) before he is born; and they use the Core *ḥadīth* to reinforce their position. The Qadarites (to whom the Mu'tazilites belong) argue that man creates his own works; otherwise, they reason, how can Allah judge mankind justly on the Last Day? The fact that the Core *ḥadīth* holds a child's *parents* responsible for the religion their son or daughter follows, seemingly bolsters the Mu'tazilites' theological position.[265] Ibn Taymiyyah, though, staunchly fights the Qadarites' mode of thinking. In fact, he claims the opposite, boldly stating that the Core *ḥadīth* proves *qadar* (باثبات القدر).[266] Ibn Taymiyyah first defends his conservative stance on *qadar* by referencing numerous Islamic texts other than the Core *ḥadīth*.

Among the favorite scriptures Ibn Taymiyyah prefers to cite comes from two similar and lengthy traditions found in Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī.[267] In this tradition Abu bin Ka'b narrates a story whereby the prophet Muḥammad tells about a time when the Israelites ask Moses about who is the most knowledgeable. When Moses replies that he is, Allah rebukes Moses for failing to give him, the Lord of all, the tribute. After rebuking Moses, Allah then introduces the Jewish prophet to a man named al-Khaḍir who Allah declares knows more than him. Al-Khaḍir proceeds to lead Moses on a journey, but before it starts he demands that Moses refrain from questioning anything he does. Moses agrees. Eventually in the tradition al-Khaḍir and Moses end up walking on a

---

[265]Ibn Taymiyah, *Dara' Ta'arud*, 8:362.

[266]Ibid., 8:410.

[267]Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, 909-12, #4725-26.

beach where three boys are playing together. Suddenly, the tradition describes al-Khaḍir killing one of the boys with his bare hands. Moses, dismayed at al-Khaḍir's behavior, asks him: "Have you not killed a blameless soul . . .?" Al-Khaḍir answers by reminding Moses about the promise he makes to not question his actions. At the end of the story, the tradition concludes by informing that the murdered boy was an unbeliever (كافر) while his parents were believers (مؤمنين). If the boy would have remained alive, the tradition states, he would have wearied his parents (أرهقهما) through oppression and blasphemy (طغيانًا وكفرًا). Thus, Allah, out of his love and mercy for the parents, orders al-Khaḍir to take the boy's life so that he does not lead them astray from Islam.

In this *ḥadīth*, Ibn Taymiyyah stresses that the boy's "unbelief existed before he was born" (كفره موجودًا قبل أن يولد). Allah "stamped" (طبع) his heart as an unbeliever and writes it down in The Book from all of eternity.[268] Ibn Taymiyyah explains that Allah "destines" a "term" (أجل) for every living thing. The Book (الكتاب) records the time each man begins his life and dies; and no one can delay or hasten man's "term" which Allah stamps in The Book (Sūrat al-Ra'd: 39). Ibn Taymiyyah, however, does not explain this verse or *ḥadīth* to mean that the murdered boy is born without "sound *fiṭrah*" (فطرة سليمة). Instead, he admits that the Core *ḥadīth* teaches that all children are born with *fiṭrah*. However, Ibn Taymiyyah further stresses that the prophet Muḥammad in the Core *ḥadīth* compares each child's initial state with an animal's in order to demonstrate man's perfect condition at birth. Notwithstanding, and as is common with animals, after they are born their owners make physical changes to their bodies—an ear is clipped, the owner brands

---

[268]Ibn Taymiyah, *Dara' Ta'arud*, 8:362-63.

it, it becomes neutered, etc. This alteration to the animal's sound condition at birth, Ibn Taymiyyah writes, is analogous to parents changing their child's *fiṭrah* after their son or daughter is born.

Depending upon the child's religious upbringing, though, *fiṭrah* can change. As the Core *ḥadīth* states, if the child's parents are Jewish, Christian, or Magian, this is equivalent to his "perfect" *fiṭrah* -state being "amputated." The altering, however, Ibn Taymiyyah explains, is in accordance with Allah's *qadar*. This explains why the previous tradition states that al-Khaḍir murders the boy, Ibn Taymiyyah writes, because even though he was born upon *fiṭrah* and his parents were believers, Allah knows he will stray. More importantly, Allah knows that this boy's unbelief will burden his parents to such a degree that he will corrupt their sound *fiṭrah*. Therefore, because Allah had already determined the boy's unbelief and the parents' belief, Ibn Taymiyyah teaches that God guides al-Khaḍir to kill the boy.

Another *ḥadīth* Ibn Taymiyyah repeatedly cites in order to remove any doubt about Allah's *qadar* is from Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.[269] Abu Hurayrah in this tradition narrates Islam's prophet's account of an argument between Adam and Moses. During their verbal altercation Moses blames Adam for "causing" the entire human race to leave *jannah*. Adam, though, surprised by Moses' lack of knowledge (علم), replies to Moses:

> 'You are the same [Moses] whom Allah endowed the knowledge of everything and selected him amongst the people as His Messenger.' He (Moses) said: 'Yes.' Adam then again said: 'Even then you blame me for an affair which had been ordained for me (قُدِّر علي) before I was created.'[270]

---

[269]Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, 4:1395-96, #6409-12.

[270]Ibid., 4:1396, #6410.

Ibn Taymiyyah highlights that in this *ḥadīth* Adam's sin pales in comparison to Allah's sovereignty in *qadar*. Meaning, Moses mentions the *consequence* of Adam's transgression, but not the *act* itself. What Adam *does* make central in the discourse with Moses, Ibn Taymiyyah writes, is Moses' poor understanding of *qadar*. In fact, Adam responds to Moses' accusation by justifying his expulsion from *jannah* by actually placing the blame upon Allah. The *ḥadīth* ends by commending Adam for getting the "better" of Moses; and this point Ibn Taymiyyah exploits. Man's sin falls under *qadar's* purview, Ibn Taymiyyah explains; and therefore, in his mind, *qadar* holds the highest priority before all other matters, even *fiṭrah*.[271]

In order to defend Allah's justice, however, the Qadarites argue that man creates his own works. Each person chooses the life he leads, they say. Nevertheless, Ibn Taymiyyah's position on *qadar* represents the majority view, i.e. Allah controls man's eternal path because he determines all things. Up until Ibn Taymiyyah's era the chasm separating these two modes of thinking (determinism versus freewill) remains broad. The methodology by which Ibn Taymiyyah uses to exposit the Core *ḥadīth*, however, ingeniously diminishes the Qadarites' theological leverage on man's freewill. By holding true to Islam's texts, Ibn Taymiyyah merely assigns chronology to Allah's *qadar* (which resembles the Qadarites' freewill stance) but without overstepping orthodoxy's theological boundaries.[272]

---

[271]Ibn Taymiyah, *Dara' Ta'arud*, 8:419-20.

[272]Holtzman, *Human Choice, Divine Guidance and the Fitra Tradition*, 176.

As mentioned above, Ibn Taymiyyah holds unswervingly to Allah's *qadar*. Islam's *qadar* instructs that everything humans experience during their lifetimes Allah writes in The Book (Sūrat al-Ḥadīd: 22). Yet, Ibn Taymiyyah, using the Core *ḥadīth*, teaches that differences in man's *qadar* begin at birth. He reasons that everyone starts their lives in a pure state due to *fiṭrah*; and just as Allah predestines man's beginning, he also determines the child's subsequent upbringing.[273] Thus, Ibn Taymiyyah emphasizes that what happens to man *after* he is born changes his *fiṭrah* and this, of course, is in accordance with Allah's *qadar*. The Qur'an makes it clear, Ibn Taymiyyah argues, that whatever Allah stamps into The Book, man's life on earth does not depart (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 29). Allah's *qadar* further states that some men God guides while others he leads astray (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 30). In the past, verses like these constrict the majority Muslim community to categorize man's *fiṭrah* at birth as either good or evil, debilitating the Jabarites' efforts from playing any role in affecting their own salvation. However, Ibn Taymiyyah's Core *ḥadīth* ingenious hermeneutic permits traditional Muslims to remain faithful to Allah's *qadar* while also empowering them with the freedom to choose. For example, Sūrat Ṭāh: 123 says, ". . . But if a guidance comes to you, then whoever follows my guidance, will not go astray nor be afflicted." Those Allah "guides," Ibn Taymiyyah says, "follow" or obey his Book and messenger. As a result, from a heavenly perspective, Allah controls man's destiny, but from an earthly one, man chooses his path

---

[273]Ibn Taymiyah, *Dara' Ta'arud*, 8:362.

because it is obedience which designates the "rightly guided" from the lost in Ibn Taymiyyah's new hermeneutic.[274]

Knowledge of God. During Islam's first three centuries, as Ash'arī highlights, numerous Islamic sects held diverse views about how man obtains divine knowledge. Some insist, Ibn Taymiyyah writes, that man's knowledge about God begins with النظر (contemplation) and use of the intellect, claiming it is impossible for man to gain Necessary Knowledge (معرفة ضرورية) from "the act of Allah" (فعل الله).[275] Although vaguely present in Ash'arī's *Maqālāt*, approximately four centuries later Ibn Taymiyyah plainly and consistently records many Muslim theologians associating *fiṭrah* with Allah's pre-existential covenant (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172) and Necessary Knowledge.[276]

Ibn Taymiyyah acknowledges that Allah conducts the pre-existential covenant with men's spirits before he forms their physical bodies (وجود الارواح قبل الاجساد). He also admits that mankind's initial knowledge of God relates to "the confession" (الاقرار) occurring in Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172.[277] Meaning, Allah in this pre-existential covenant challenges Adam's pre-incarnate progeny to testify his lordship in their lives; and when the Lord asks them "Am I not your Lord," they reply in unison: "Yea! we do testify!"

---

[274]Ibid., 8:407.

[275]Ibid., 8:378.

[276]Ibid., 8:423.

[277]Ibid., 8:422.

Hence, man's awareness of Allah and his lordship over his life is what many, Ibn Taymiyyah writes, regard as Necessary Knowledge.[278]

Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah clearly delineates two types of groups disputing the way in which man accesses knowledge about God—1) those supporting نظر aided by the intellect, and 2) those giving direct correlation between the pre-existential covenant's Necessary Knowledge and *fiṭrah*. Notwithstanding, there exists a smaller third group whose views about *fiṭrah* from the Core *ḥadīth* evoke Ibn Taymiyyah's most thorough *fiṭrah* development. This third view states that the *fiṭrah* man is born with is neither full of knowledge (معرفة) or denial (إنكار), nor having faith (إيمان) or disbelief (كفر). According to this view, the phrase "No child is born except on Al-Fitra . . ." means that Allah creates every person in an unimpaired state (على سلامة), with a disposition (خلقة), nature (طبع), and physical constitution (بنية).[279] Those professing the third view explain the Core *ḥadīth's* second half—". . . as an animal produces a perfect young animal; do you see any part of its body amputated"—that Allah is merely endorsing man's wholeness (سلامة) and lack of deficiency (نقص) at birth. In addition, they state, "It is impossible to understand that a child at the time of his birth is conscious of unbelief or faith, because Allah brought them [children] out not having knowledge (لا يفقهون) of anything."[280] To warrant this argument this third group cites Sūrat al-Naḥl: 78: "Allah brought you forth from the wombs of your

---

[278]Ibid., 8:423.

[279]Ibid., 8:442.

[280]Ibid., 8:443.

mothers when you could perceive (knowing) nothing (لا تعلمون شيئًا) . . ." 'Abd al-Barr summarizes the third view by saying:

> This statement [by the third group] is the most sound from what has been said about *fiṭrah* which children are born upon, [meaning] that *fiṭrah* [equals] soundness (سلامة) and uprightness (إستقامة) . . .[281]

Ibn Taymiyyah resolutely disagrees with 'Abd al-Barr and the third view; and the reason he gives pushes *fiṭrah's* meaning to new limits.

If *fiṭrah's* connotation in the Core *ḥadīth* and Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 constrains itself to impartiality, avoiding a disposition favoring disbelief or faith, then *fiṭrah*, Ibn Taymiyyah writes, is uncommendable, unworthy of praise (مدح). How is this possible, Ibn Taymiyyah asks, when both scriptures' contexts unite *fiṭrah* to Allah, elevating God's religion over false ones? It is Allah who creates man, and consequently, when the prophet Muḥammad declares "No child is born except on Al-Fitra (Islam) and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian", Ibn Taymiyyah argues that blatant comparison exists between man's *fiṭrah* and the other three religions. In other words, Allah's prophet does not say, "And then his parents make him a Muslim, Jew, Christian, and Magian," but instead Muḥammad omits "Muslim." In Ibn Taymiyyah's view, this omission demonstrates *fiṭrah's* unique affiliation with Islam and that the other religions (ملل) are "corrupt" (فاسدة), leading its adherents to unbelief (كفر).[282] This is the reason why, Ibn Taymiyyah states, the prophet Muḥammad provides the example about animals' "perfect" (جمعاء) condition at birth. The prophet Muḥammad in this analogy, thus,

---

[281]Ibid.

[282]Ibid., 8:444.

praises the animal's perfect state, relating it to man's *fiṭrah*. Furthermore, any "amputation" of the animal's members symbolizes a change in man's *fiṭrah*.[283] Furthermore, after commending *fiṭrah's* nature, Ibn Taymiyyah comments about Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. He writes, "So his [Allah's] command to require his *fiṭrah*, which [all] people are created (فطر) upon, how can there not be in it (*fiṭrah*) praise (مدح) . . .?"[284]

Ibn Taymiyyah's belief that *fiṭrah's* nature contains *praise* undergirds his theology about man's knowledge of God, and his argument fundamentally establishes inequality between *fiṭrah's* connection to Islam and other false religions. Since man's *fiṭrah* is not neutral, but rather instinctively inclines towards the "correct religion," then inherent within its essence, Ibn Taymiyyah writes, is Necessary Knowledge about Allah.[285] If this was not true, he continues, then "unbelief and faith are equal and that nullifies its [*fiṭrah's*] praise."[286]

What, then, does *fiṭrah* automatically know or insert into man's nature? To answer these questions Ibn Taymiyyah refers to the previously covered *ḥadīth* where in it Islam's prophet chooses drinking milk over wine.[287] After making this decision the angel Gabriel says, "Thank God who guided you to *fiṭrah*, otherwise your followers would go astray." Muḥammad knows intrinsically that the best option for him is milk, just as the newborn infant instinctively knows to nurse. In similar fashion, then, Allah melds into

---

[283]Ibid., 8:445.

[284]Ibid.

[285]Ibid., 8:446.

[286]Ibid., 8:447.

[287]Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, 1099, #5576.

man through *fiṭrah* the desire "to know Allah."[288] Man is born to know Allah. In fact, just as Allah guides the prophet Muḥammad to choose milk, God guides man to know him. No outside influences, then, in Ibn Taymiyyah's view, are responsible.

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, though, *fiṭrah's* nature far exceeds mere awareness and desire to know Allah. Ibn Taymiyyah writes, "It is clear that in it [*fiṭrah*] is the obligatory power to love Allah, submit to him, and be faithful to him in religion."[289] Thus, Ibn Taymiyyah reasons that because Allah creates man to know him, then Allah through *fiṭrah* moves man from a neutral position about God, into a positive one. Man's transfer from neutrality to positively seeking Allah, Ibn Taymiyyah calls love. Knowing Allah through *fiṭrah*, as a result, is synonymous with loving Allah.[290] As long as there are no outside influences opposing the pursuit and love for Allah, e.g. parents' religious teachings, man's *fiṭrah* naturally moves him in this direction. In short, this next quote by Ibn Taymiyyah aptly brings this subsection about *fiṭrah* and knowledge of God to a close. He writes:

> It is necessary that *fiṭrah* requires knowledge, and love; and this love is conditioned upon knowledge, for what man does not know, he does not love, and love for beloved things is not because of outside [influences], but is dispositional (جبلّي) and natural (فطري). And if [this] love is dispositional and natural, then also its condition is dispositional and natural knowledge; so then it is necessary for there to be in fiṭrah the love [for] the Creator [along] with the confessing him (الإقرار به) [as Lord].[291]

Ḥanīfan. Towards the end of Ibn Taymiyyah's discussion about *fiṭrah* he comments about the link between حنيفًا and *fiṭrah* in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. Allah in this verse

---

[288]Ibn Taymiyah, *Dara' Ta'arud*, 8:448.

[289]Ibid., 8:449.

[290]Ibid., 8:449-50.

[291]Ibid., 8:450-51.

commands unbelievers: "So direct your face toward the religion (الدين), inclining to truth (حنيفًا) . . ."; and it is Ibn Taymiyyah's thinking about حنيفًا which significantly influences the way he interprets *fiṭrah* in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 as a whole. While trying to grasp حنيفًا's meaning and its relationship to "religion," Ibn Taymiyyah repeatedly cites one of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim's traditions narrated by 'Iyāḍ bin Ḥimār al-Mujāshi'ī. Towards the beginning of this *ḥadīth* the prophet Muḥammad says:

> . . . I [the Lord] have created my servants as one having a natural inclination (خلقت عبادي حنفاء كلهم) to the worship of Allah, but it is Satan who turns them away from the right religion and he makes unlawful what has been declared lawful for them and he commands them to ascribe partnership with Me . . .[292]

"حنفاء" is the plural form of "حنيف;" and in this above quote Ṣidīqī translates it as "one having a natural inclination to the worship of Allah". What the English translation fails to draw out is the Arabic phrase "كلهم", which means "all of them." The transliterated segment literally means "I created my servants *all of them* as one[s] having a natural inclination to the worship of Allah" (writer's emphasis). After making his point, Ibn Taymiyyah appears to find at least two similarities between this tradition and Sūrat al-Rūm: 30: 1) Allah creates all people with *fiṭrah* as حنفاء, and 2) everyone starts with the right religion, with change coming solely from outside influences—e.g. parents, Satan, etc.

Combining Ibn Taymiyyah's comments on the knowledge of God with حنيفية (حنيف's infinitive), he writes, "And this is the origin of الحنيفية which Allah created his creation upon, and it is the فطرت Allah which Allah commanded by it (*fiṭrah*)."[293] Ibn

---

[292]Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, 4:1488, #6853.

[293]Ibn Taymiyah, *Dara' Ta'arud*, 8:451.

Taymiyyah clarifies from this statement that in his view الحنيفية and *fiṭrah* are intimately related. More specifically, Ibn Taymiyyah teaches that الحنيفية *outwardly* manifests *fiṭrah's* inner nature.[294] *Fiṭrah* gives man the knowledge of Allah (along with its bent towards him), Ibn Taymiyyah states, which in turn simultaneously bears حنيفية's fruit of love and faithfulness to practice religion's obligations (موجبات). The two—*fiṭrah* and حنيفية—cannot be separated; and thus, together they form the "right" or "correct" religion (دين).

Does Ibn Taymiyyah, then, regard *fiṭrah*, حنيفية, and دين, as synonymous with Islam? The closest Ibn Taymiyyah gets to answering in the affirmative comes when he writes:

> But as for the one who says: 'They were born upon the فطرت of Islam, or upon confession in the Creator . . . or upon the First Knowledge the day the [pre-existential] covenant was taken among them [Adam's progeny]—[with] these three there is no inconsistency (منافاة) between them . . .'[295]

"These three" by which Ibn Taymiyyah states "there is no inconsistency," refers to "فطرت of Islam," "confession in the Creator," and "First Knowledge." Despite the total harmony Ibn Taymiyyah relegates to "these three," it does not however appear that he entirely considers them equals. Rather instead, Ibn Taymiyyah seems to view the pre-existential covenant and *fiṭrah's* First Knowledge as Islam's forerunners: the latter being the natural progression of the former two.

Yes, Ibn Taymiyyah finds *fiṭrah* praiseworthy due to its clear connection to Islam's superiority over false religions. Nonetheless, although some Muslims equate

---

[294]Ibid.

[295]Ibid., 8:454.

"born upon fitrah" directly translating into "born upon Islam," it seems Ibn Taymiyyah ultimately disagrees. More accurately, Ibn Taymiyyah prefers to say "born upon حنيفية . . . for it is not intended by it ["born upon Islam"] that when he [a child] comes out of his mother's womb that he is knowing this religion [Islam] or wants it."[296] As a result, the right religion's adherents are حنفاء, all of them, because Allah creates each of them upon *fiṭrah*. To Ibn Taymiyyah this is Allah's "creation" that never "changes."

Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. Applying Ibn Taymiyyah's above comments to Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 results in the following exegesis.

- 1st Part: "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people. . ."
    - Commentary:
        - Allah commands all people to follow the religion that they initially belong to as a result of knowing him through *fiṭrah*. Through *fiṭrah* each human being initially gravitates towards Allah which simultaneously produces love for him and good works (حنيفًا).
- 2nd Part: "No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know."
    - Commentary:
        - *Fiṭrah* is Allah's creation with which he creates all men. Before birth, man cannot change *fiṭrah* and its bent towards Allah. After birth, a non-Muslim's parents' teaching and Satan's influences can change a child's *fiṭrah*. Man's *fiṭrah* instigates and encourages worshiping Allah which forms the right religion. Most people, however, are ignorant about Allah's religion and as a result, do not practice it.

Ibn Taymiyyah analysis. Up until Ibn Taymiyyah's era, *fiṭrah's* concept remains largely undeveloped. Through interpreting the Core *ḥadīth* and Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, and in order to defend conservative Islam's stance on *qadar*, Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies

---

[296]Ibid., 8:383.

fiṭrah's meaning and pushes its nature to new limits. First of all, Ibn Taymiyyah uses these two key Islamic texts to integrate chronology into *qadar*. If all men are born with *fiṭrah* which afterwards their parents' upbringing can alter, then Ibn Taymiyyah reasons that mankind's *qadar* up until the time of birth is identical. In other words, Allah predestines all people to be born with *fiṭrah*, and then following birth *qadar* determines the rest of their lives. However, because Ibn Taymiyyah applies chronology to *qadar*, through *fiṭrah's* key texts, he makes it possible for mainline Muslims to keep their conservative position about *qadar* and at the same time empowers them with the choice to obey. In general, a pre-Ibn Taymiyyah *qadar*-theology states that Allah writes man's destiny into The Book as either a believer or unbeliever. An Ibn Taymiyyah *qadar*-theology, however, gives standard *qadar* qur'anic verses renewed interpretation. Allah in Sūrat Ṭāh: 123 says, ". . . But if a guidance from Me comes to you, then whoever follows my guidance, will not go astray nor be afflicted." A pre-Ibn Taymiyyah *qadar*-theology links *fiṭrah's* nature to either those "guided" or those gone "astray." An Ibn Taymiyyah *qadar*-theology, founded upon Core *ḥadīth* chronology, allows Muslims to confidently confess *qadar* and positively influence their eternal destiny by obeying Allah's guidance.

Ibn Taymiyyah also forges new limits for *fiṭrah*. To settle the ongoing debate about how man attains knowledge about God—النظر or Necessary Knowledge—Ibn Taymiyyah refutes 'Abd al-Barr's view which states man is born knowing nothing: without faith or unbelief. It is Ibn Taymiyyah's stance of "praise" against 'Abd al-Barr's view that provides him the proper platform to not only maintain *fiṭrah* contains the knowledge of God, but that it also spurs man to love God, submit to him, and practice his religion faithfully.

Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah advances *fiṭrah's* concept by expositing حنيفًا in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. First of all, Ibn Taymiyyah knows the Core *ḥadīth* states that all men are born with *fiṭrah* and also that another tradition in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim declares that all men are born حنفاء. Ibn Taymiyyah, assimilating these two Islamic truths, then determines that *fiṭrah's* nature within man naturally produces visible good deeds, which Ibn Taymiyyah associates with حنيفًا, testifying that the "right religion" needs both. Consequently, *fiṭrah's* development by Ibn Taymiyyah provides the past and present conservative Muslim community with Sūrat al-Rūm: 30's accepted exposition.

This last section surveys a few of the most important Muslim authors responsible for developing *fiṭrah's* concept. Ash'arī's (d. 330 AH) work supplies historical context to the early Islamic community's rudimentary understanding of *fiṭrah*. During the first three centuries Muslims dispute *fiṭrah's* impact upon man's works, his knowledge of Allah, and his destiny at birth. Overall, though, Ash'arī's illustrates *fiṭrah's* connection to man's divine link with Allah. The theologian and philosopher, Ghazālī (d. d. 505 AH), believes *fiṭrah's* essence equals faith in one God, or *tawḥīd*. *Fiṭrah* contains First Things which Ghazālī explains originate from man's mind unprompted by the intellect or senses. Ghazālī writes that if man remembers his inborn faith existing in *fiṭrah*, then his intellect will lead him to Islam's teachings. The last author, Ibn Taymiyyah, defines *fiṭrah's* nature with greater precision. While staying faithful to Allah's *qadar*, Ibn Taymīyah (d. 728 AH) clarifies *fiṭrah's* obscurities present in Ash'arī's work. His Core *ḥadīth* and Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 hermeneutic depicts *fiṭrah* not only as man's Necessary Knowledge of Allah, but also the power in man leading him to love Allah, submit to him, and faithfully practice his religion.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an etymological, qur'anic, traditional, and historical study about *fiṭrah*. In general, *fiṭrah's* Arabic root (ف – ط - ر) depicts an object's initial creation. The rare noun form—*fiṭrah*—explicitly refers to man's inner disposition, or nature. *Fiṭrah's* qur'anic meaning reveals that its essence is synonymous with *tawḥīd* due to its direct relationship with Allah's pre-existential covenant. The Core *ḥadīth* affirms *fiṭrah's* qur'anic meaning and also describes how it intrinsically leads all people to faith in Allah. Furthermore, other traditions reveal *fiṭrah's* connection to man's outward religious behavior. Lastly, Ash'arī and Ghazālī record in their writings that *fiṭrah's* essence originates in Allah. Its nature in man, starting at birth, spontaneously leads man to know him. Ibn Taymiyyah's definition affirms and exceeds Ash'arī and Ghazālī's. Indeed, *fiṭrah's* essence naturally prompts man towards *tawḥīd*, but Ibn Taymiyyah's work further explains that *fiṭrah* stimulates mankind to love and obey Allah.

CHAPTER 3

THE NATURE OF *NAFS*

The preceding chapter establishes man's innate inclination *towards* Allah. Human nature in Islam through *fiṭrah*, then, is faith-driven and thus, good. Another major factor influencing Islam's stance about man's essence relates to his soul, or *nafs* (نفس). Numerous verses in the Qur'an describe the soul as good or evil. Also, many early Muslim theologians write about the *nafs* ' dual nature. Consequently, due to the soul's significance within Islam's view of man, and in similar fashion to *fiṭrah 's* study, this chapter highlights the *nafs* ' good and evil essence.

Defining *Nafs* from the Qur'an

Compared to *fiṭrah 's* sole occurrence in Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, *nafs* (and its plural forms—نفوس or أنفس)[297] in the Qur'an appears two hundred and ninety-seven times. Even though grammatically *nafs* occurs most often as a Reflexive Pronoun (e.g. نفسه—himself; أنفسكم—yourselves), the many remaining qur'anic verses define it as: "soul," "human being," "power of understanding," and "heart."[298] This chapter's objective aims at studying *nafs* ' meaning as *soul*, most particularly its dual-nature and inclination towards evil. Three main sections attempt to achieve this chapter's goal: 1) the soul's dual capacity, 2) the soul's three modes, and 3) the soul's historical development.

---

[297]Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, 149.

[298]Gavin Picken, "Tazkiyat Al-Nafs: The Qur'anic Paradigm," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 106-7.

The Soul's Dual Capacity

The Qur'an states plainly that Allah gives life to man by first creating his soul with a divine purpose. When a person dies, the Qur'an further states that Allah on the Day of Judgment holds man's soul accountable for its good and evil deeds. Concerning these good and evil acts, the Qur'an reveals that Allah, while creating the soul, fashions into it this dual capacity.

Allah creates the soul. Allah states in Sūrat al-Nisā': 1:

> • يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱتَّقُوا۟ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلَّذِى خَلَقَكُم مِّن نَّفْسٍ وَٰحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَآءً ۚ وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ ٱلَّذِى تَسَآءَلُونَ بِهِۦ وَٱلْأَرْحَامَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا
>
> • O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah hath been a watcher over you.[299]

Despite some English versions translating *nafs* as "human being,"[300] this rendering lacks precision. Qurṭubī clarifies this point by focusing on the phrase "نفس واحدة", or "single soul." *Nafs* is feminine, not masculine, Qurṭubī writes. The words for "person" (إنسان) or "human being" (بشر) are masculine, but the prophet Muḥammad prophesies instead using the feminine adjective "واحدة" in lieu of "واحد" in order to correctly match *nafs* ' feminine case.[301] So, on one hand, as Ṭabarī[302] and Ibn Kathīr[303] attest, Allah creates the human

---

[299]The writer uses the English-Pickthal version to emphasize the نفس's most correct English translation, "soul."

[300]For example, the 'Abdullah Yūsuf 'Alī version translates نفس as "single person".

[301]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 5:3.

[302]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 4:223-24.

[303]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 2:196.

race from Adam. On the other hand, both reiterate that Allah intentionally refers to Adam as a "single soul."

Indeed, Allah creates mankind from a living soul, but Rāzī claims that this verse further accentuates the soul's divine purpose. Before *and* after the phrase "نفس واحدة", Allah commands "mankind" to "Be careful of your duty" towards him. Twice in this verse the plural imperative "اتّقوا" is used which means "to fear" or "be devout".[304] According to Rāzī, this revelation not only teaches that Allah creates man from a "single soul," but that the engrained purpose in mankind through Allah's creation process is obeying him. Rāzī writes:

> When he was creating us, originating our beings, and attributes, we [became] his slaves and he our Lord; and lordship requires the execution of his commands by his slaves, and servanthood requires [being] led by the Lord, and Originator, and Creator.[305]

Therefore, Allah creates the soul, which *is* man's "being," and for the purpose of diligent submission.

Allah judges the soul. The Qur'an teaches that Allah creates man's soul, and when God takes a person's life, it is again the *soul* God judges. Sūrat al-'Ankubūt: 57 states, "Every soul will taste of death. Then unto Us ye will be returned." In fact, two other verses (Sūrat al-'Imrān: 185; Sūrat al-Anbiyā': 35) share the same initial phrase, "كل نفس ذائقة الموت", which means, "Every soul tastes death." A fourth verse states (Sūrat al-'Imrān: 185), "Nor can a soul die except by Allah's leave" (وما كان لنفس ان تموت إلا بإذن الله).

---

[304]Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, 162.

[305]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 5:129.

Commenting on "Every soul will taste death", Rāzī writes, "This, in general, requires the death of all . . . the People of Jannah and the People of Fire, because all of them are souls."[306] Thus, God plans for each soul to die, and neither man nor animal can "deviate" (محيد).[307] Death, however, finds no place in Allah, for he alone eternally lives (الحي الذي لا يموت).[308]

When man dies, his soul on the Day of Resurrection (يوم القيامة) faces Allah's judgement. At this moment man's soul returns to Allah receiving "full recompense" (توفّون أجوركم يوم القيامة) for the good *and* evil it has done on earth (Sūrat al-'Imrān: 185). Allah in Sūrat al-Anbiyā': 35 adds that prior to the soul's death, on earth he "tests [men] by evil and by good, by way of trial" (ونبلوكم بالشر والخير فتنة). Qurṭubī summarizes the soul's lot during life and at the Day of Judgment in death:

> We [Allah] test you with hardship and prosperity, [what is] lawful and unlawful, in order to see your thankfulness and patience; and to us you return, i.e. for recompense by [your] works.[309]

Allah fashions good and evil into the soul. There are three verses in the Qur'an communicating the soul's capacity for good and evil. The first one, Sūrat al-Baqarah: 286 says:

> • لا يُكلِّفُ ٱللَّهُ نفْسا إلا وُسْعها لها ما كسبتْ وعليْها ما ٱكْتسبتْ ربّنا لا تُؤاخذْنا إن نّسينا أوْ أخْطأْنا ...
> • On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray): "Our Lord! condemn us not if we forget or fall into error...

---

[306]Ibid., 5:101.

[307]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 4:189.

[308]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 2:169.

[309]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 11:190.

This verse contains many parts worthy of investigating, the initial one being: "On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear". God does not "burden," or يكلّف the soul. يكلّف means "to compel a person to do anything difficult, or above his strength."[310] Iṣfahānī writes that يكلّف infers placing "trouble" (مشقّة) on someone.[311] In this case, the "someone" that Allah does not exasperate by placing undue hardship upon refers to man's *nafs*.

Allah refrains from tasking men's souls beyond what they can bear because each soul has its own "capacity,"[312] or وسع. Yūsuf 'Ali's English version misses this key point. The initial Arabic phrase says "لا يكلّف الله نفسًا إلا وسعها", which a more literal translation reads "Allah does not burden a soul except [according to] its capacity." Thus, one can have confidence that Allah refers to the soul as containing varying capacities because its feminine personal pronoun "ها" suffixes وسع.

This point Ṭabarī affirms[313] which leads to the next qur'anic portion in Sūrat al-Baqarah: 286: "It gets every good that it earns and it suffers every ill that it earns." The capacity Allah creates inside each man's soul comprises its aptitude for "good" *and* "evil". The Arabic accurately connects the *nafs* to its capacity for "earning" good *and* evil. It states, "لها ما كسبت و عليها ما اكتسبت", which means "For it [to the soul's advantage], is what it earned; and against it [to the soul's detriment], is what it earned". The word

---

[310]Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, 127.

[311]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 2:659.

[312]Zakariyya, *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah*, 6:109.

[313]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 3:153-54.

"earned" in this verse occurs twice in Yūsuf 'Ali's English translation, but the Arabic verbs, although comprising the same root (ب - س – ك), are different. Concerning the soul's "good" that it earns, the feminine-singular past tense Form I verb is used; and regarding the "evil" it earns, it is the feminine-singular past tense Form VIII verb that occurs. Ibn Manẓūr suggests that Form I (كسبت) occurs in "good" contexts, while "evil" settings require Form VIII (اكتسبت).[314] Al-Wāḥidī argues that there is no difference between Form I and VIII (أن الكسب والاكتساب واحد لا فرق بينهما).[315]

Despite the minor grammatical disputes over why the Qur'an uses two different verb forms in this verse, the critical principle it makes about man's soul is substantial—Allah *infuses the soul* with the capacity for good and evil. Rāzī writes that man's soul "craves" evil (تشتهيه النفس الشرّ), is "attracted to it" (منجذبة إليه), and "commands it" (وأمارة به).[316] Rāzī also adds this comment:

> It is evident that it [the soul] has reward for what it earned, and against it punishment for what it earned, and this is clear in these two collected merits, and it is not necessary to exalt one of them and remove the other.[317]

A comment by Jalālayn on Sūrat al-Baqarah: 286's last segment appears to give greater weight to the danger present within the "soul's intercommunication" (حديث النفس).[318] Jalālayn does this by explaining the historical background to this verse, describing how Muslims came to Muḥammad complaining about the "evil

---

[314]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 5:3870.

[315]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 4:123.

[316]Ibid., 4:124.

[317]Ibid.

[318]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 3:154.

suggestions"[319] (الوسوسة) they were hearing which in turn causes them to worry about Allah's impending judgment. To this Jalālayn later writes, "No one is responsible for the sin of another, nor for what he did not earn because of the evil suggestions of his soul" (ولا بما لم يكسبه ممّا وسوست به نفسه).[320] This response causes the prophet Muḥammad to prophesy—"(Pray): Our Lord! condemn us not if we forget or fall into error..."

Allah demonstrates in this verse that he does not minimalize man's tendency towards "forgetfulness," "error," or the need for divine aid against his soul's evil cravings. Therefore, it is evident that Allah gives the soul capacity for good *and* evil, as well as elevates man's need for divine intervention due to its *inner* struggle.

A second verse demonstrating the good *and* evil Allah embeds into man's soul comes from Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10 which says:

• ونفس وما سوّىها (٧) فألهمها فجورها وتقوىها (٨) قد أفلح من زكّىها (٩) وقد خاب من دسّىها (١٠)
• By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it; (7) And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;— (8) Truly he succeeds that purifies it, (9) And he fails that corrupts it! (10)

This "early" and short Meccan *sūrah* begins by celebrating "Allah's mighty works of nature"[321]—the sun, moon, day, night, heavens, and earth. The seventh and final piece of creation that Allah praises is man's soul. According to the first phrase—"By the Soul, and the proportion and order given to it"—Allah's creative force influences the soul in two ways: 1) he "proportions" and "orders" it, and 2) he "enlightens" it.

---

[319]Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, 159.

[320]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 49.

[321]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 1653.

"Proportion" occurs in this verse as a masculine-singular Form II past tense verb—سوّى; and it carries the sense of "making something equal" (سوّيته به) or "alike" (تماثُل).[322] With regards to Sūrat al-Shams: 7 and سوّى, Iṣfahānī writes that this verse "refers to the powers which he [Allah] made uprightly (مقوّمة) for the soul and then attributes (فنسب) the action (الفعل) to it."[323] Mujaahid similarly defines "proportions it" (سوّاها) as referring to Allah "creating it and balancing it" (خلقها و عدّلها).[324]

Yūsuf 'Ali's translation for the second verb—ألهم—which he renders "enlightens", fails to convey its robust meaning. Jurjānī explains that إلهام (the verbal noun) describes the knowledge Allah gives a person when he calls (يدعو) him to do something. Therefore, إلهام's meaning refers to the knowledge that man cannot obtain through the senses (نظر) or deductive reasoning (استدلال).[325] Ibn Manẓūr defines ألهم as "to teach" (لقّن), and more specifically, as "Allah casting (يلقي الله في النفس أمرًا) into [someone's] soul a matter inspiring him to do or leave something, and it is a kind of [divine] inspiration (الوحي)."[326]

Applying the above definitions for the two verbs (سوّى and ألهم) in Sūrat al-Shams: 7-8, the writer's translation reads, "By the soul which he [Allah] gives balance and inspires". In what way, though, is Allah "balancing" and "inspiring" the soul to action? Sūrat al-Shams: 8 finishes with this answer: "to its wrong (فجورها) and its right

---

[322]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 3:2161.

[323]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 1:366.

[324]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 20:51.

[325]Jurjānī, *Al-Ta'rifat*, 49.

[326]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 5:4089.

(تقواها)". Penrice rightly gives فجور and تقوى much stronger terminology making his version read "to its wickedness and its piety."[327] Jalālayn says Sūrat al-Shams: 7-8 means that Allah "demonstrates to it (بيّن لها) [the soul] the way of good and evil." Ibn 'Abbās writes that this phrase means Allah "teaches it (علّمها) [the soul] obedience (الطاعة) and disobedience (المعصية)."

Despite the apparent widespread unity in this verse between Muslim scholars concerning the soul's aptitude toward good and evil, disagreement arose over a polemical *ḥadīth* affronting Mu'tazilite theology about Allah's justice and qadar.[328] In this tradition by Abū al-Aswad, Ibn Ḥuṣayn asks the prophet Muḥammad whether or not people's lives are preordained (أ شيء قضي ومضى عليهم من قدر سبق) by Allah or if their "fate" rests upon their individual choices in obeying or disobeying the prophets. Ibn Ḥuṣayn continues inquiring Islam's prophet by asking him if Allah acts unjustly by "punishing" those he preordaines for hell. The prophet Muḥammad responds unequivocally to Ibn Ḥuṣayn's question, declaring that all things are "decreed by Destiny and preordained for them [people]." He then warrants his position by quoting Sūrat al-Shams: 7-8, "Consider the soul and Him Who made it perfect, then breathed into it its sin and its piety."[329]

As a result of this tradition's influence, many Muslim theologians exegete Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10 solely within their qadar-hermeneutic. Rāzī supplies some

---

[327]Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, 108, 162.

[328]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 16:175.

[329]Muslim, *Sahih Muslim*, 4:1394-95, #6406.

instances of this.[330] For example, one view suggests that Allah "inspires the pious believer in his piety and the unbeliever in his wickedness." Sa'īd bin Jubayr decides to substitute ألهمها (inspired it) with ألزمها (required it), asserting that Allah "requires" a person's soul to be either only wicked or pious. Notwithstanding Muslims' strong views about qadar or individual choice, one view relating to Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10 attempts to pragmatically illustrate what happens inside man's soul as Allah "proportions and orders it." It says:

> Let the rational man try his soul . . . when a person is possibly neglecting something and then an image instantly appears in his heart, and upon this happening . . . there is an inclination in his heart towards something, . . . this inclination organizes the movement of his members [causing] the issuance of an action . . .[331]

Regardless which "action" occurs as the result of man's choice or divine qadar, Allah is the one who "balances" and "inspires" man's soul with the aptitude towards wickedness *and* piety, evil *and* good, disobedience *and* obedience.

The last two verses of Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10 reinforce the soul's dual capacity. The prophet Muḥammad says, "Truly he succeeds that purifies it, (9) And he fails that corrupts it! (10)." These two verses formulate man's divine directive for success, and central to both stipulations is the soul. He who "purifies it" (زكّاها) succeeds in this life and then proceeds to *jannah*; but he who "corrupts it" (دسّاها), "fails" and goes to Hell.

The Form II past tense verb زكّى generally means to "purify" someone or something.[332] Iṣfahānī's definition emphasizes the benefit man receives from a pure

---

[330]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 16:175.

[331]Ibid.

[332]Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, 62.

heart—1) immediate "praiseworthy characteristics" in this life, and 2) "recompense and reward" in the next.[333] Ibn Manẓūr's زكّى definition reveals an important qur'anic truth (which Iṣfahānī also mentions)—God alone purifies man.[334] One of many examples[335] of this occurs in Sūrat al-Nisā': 49 which says,

> Hast thou not turned thy thought to those who claim purity for themselves (يزكّون أنفسهم)? Nay,— but Allah doth sanctify (يزكّي) whom He pleaseth...

Yūsuf 'Ali's translation—"purifies it"—depicts زكّى accurately. However, the Form I past tense verb—"corrupts" (دسى)—although his translation is acceptable, some disagreement exists over the actual verb root. Penrice writes that دسى means "corrupt,"[336] but Jalālayn, Iṣfahānī, and Ibn Manẓūr use the Form I past tense verb دسّ instead. Jalālayn writes that "corrupts it", or دسّاها, means "to conceal it (أخفاها) with disobedience, and its origin (أصله) is: دسّسها; the second 'س is replaced (أُبْدِلت) with a reduced alif."[337] Jalālayn's definition "to conceal it" (أخفاها) conveys a similar meaning to that of Iṣfahānī's who states that دسّاها should be replaced by دسّسها. Iṣfahānī writes that دسّسها means "inserting something into something with a forceful blow" (إدخال الشيء في الشيء بضرب الاكراه).[338] Ibn Manẓūr's definition of دسّسها nearly replicates Iṣfahānī's, however, he then provides a definition for the original qur'anic verb—دسى. He writes: "corrupting it

---

[333]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 1:313.

[334]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 3:1849.

[335]Sūrat al-Baqarah: 129, 151, 174; Sūrat al-Nūr: 21; Sūrat al-Najm: 32

[336]Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, 48.

[337]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 595.

[338]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 244.

(دسّسها) makes it little [and] vile (خسيسة) through wicked work."[339] Whether the most accurate meaning is "corrupt," "conceal," or "forcibly inserting," it is clear that wicked and contemptible human behavior damages the soul.

Those holding to qadar, though, place the onus on Allah for the soul's purification and corruption. Ṭabarī provides an example of this from Ibn 'Abbās who translates verse eight, "he succeeds who Allah purifies his soul"; and verse nine, "he fails who Allah corrupts his soul, so he [Allah] leads him astray."[340] Most pertinent to Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10, though, is the point that Allah creates the soul with *balance*, inspiring into it the capacity for both good *and* evil.

The third qur'anic verse substantiating the soul's dual capacity comes from Sūrat al-'Imrān: 30 which says:

• يوم تجدُ كلُّ نفسٍ ما عملتْ من خيرٍ مُحضرًا وما عملتْ من سُوءٍ تودُّ لو أنّ بينها وبينهُ أمدًا بعيدًا...
• On the day when every soul will be confronted with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil...

Rāzī[341] and Qurṭubī[342] establish this verse's context upon Sūrat al-'Imrān: 28-29 which includes Allah warning (يحذّركم) Muslims against receiving assistance from unbelievers. They state that on Judgment Day, when non-Muslims return to their maker, Allah will disclose all that is "hidden in their hearts" (إن تخفو ما في صدوركم). Sūrat al-

---

[339]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 2:1373.

[340]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 30:212.

[341]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 4:14.

[342]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 4:37-38.

'Imrān: 30 adds that Judgment Day is the day when Allah "rewards" (يجازيكم) and punishes them.[343]

On Judgment Day, Allah deals directly with man's *nafs*. No Muslim scholar denies this future reality when "Every soul will be confronted" (يوم تجد كل نفس; or literally, "every soul will find")[344] with the "good" (خير) *and* "evil" (سوء) that "it has done" (عملت). Man's soul waits expectantly for Allah to reward the "good" it has done; however, concerning the evil it commits, the soul "wishes" (تودّ) that a "great distance" between it and its sin separates them. Ibn Kathīr summarizes this verse by writing:

> This [verse] is a warning for his servants to fear and revere him [Allah], and to not commit what he has forbidden and hates for them to do. Indeed, he knows about all of their matters and is able to hasten the punishment.[345]

Analysis. The Qur'an promotes the soul's dual capacity. From Adam's soul, Allah creates all souls; and on the Day of Resurrection, Allah judges man's soul for its good *and* evil. The obedience and disobedience that the soul "earns" does not surprise Allah because he *intentionally* melds into it this dual capacity. With divine forethought Allah carefully balances the soul's inner composition, *deliberately* inspiring its capacity for piety and wickedness. Moreover, the successful man purifies his soul, while corrupting it makes him a failure. In the Qur'an, Allah holds man's *nafs* responsible for the good *and* evil it commits. Those Muslims espousing the *qadar*-hermeneutic place the

---

[343]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 53.

[344]Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, 157.

[345]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 2:28.

onus for man's good and evil deeds on Allah; but whether man's works find their ultimate source in Allah or not, the Qur'an instructs that they originate in man's soul.

The Soul's Three Modes

Consistent with the qur'anic principle that the soul has a dual capacity for good and evil are the three different soul personalities listed in the Qur'an. They are: 1) the Tranquil Soul (النفس المطمئنّة), 2) the Blaming Soul (النفس اللوّامة), and 3) the Commanding Soul (النفس الامّارة).[346] These titles for the soul come directly from the Qur'an's text and *do not* represent three separate souls. Rather, they delineate the three modes man's soul operates in depending on its healthy or unhealthy spiritual state. Due to this dissertation seeking to establish man's dual-nature in Islam, and because the second chapter demonstrates that *fiṭrah's* nature inclines man towards Allah, this section focuses the majority of its attention upon the Commanding Soul's evil.

The Tranquil Soul. The Qur'an mentions this mode once in Sūrat al-Fajr: 27-30. The end of this Meccan revelation contrasting man's earthly riches to Allah's heavenly reward[347] states:

• يَـٰٓأَيَّتُهَا ٱلنَّفْسُ ٱلْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ (٢٧) ٱرْجِعِىٓ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً (٢٨) فَٱدْخُلِى فِى عِبَـٰدِى (٢٩) وَٱدْخُلِى جَنَّتِى(٣٠)

• (To the righteous soul will be said:) "O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction! (27) "Come back thou to thy Lord well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him! (28) "Enter thou, then among my Devotees! (29) "Yea, enter thou my Heaven"! (30)

Yūsuf 'Ali's English translation for verse twenty-seven is verbose. The Arabic simply states "Oh my Tranquil Soul" (يا أيّتها النفس المطمئنّة). Al-Fayyūmī explains that

---

[346]Jurjānī, *Al-Ta'rifat*, 252.

[347]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 1643.

المطمئنّة's (Tranquil) root—ن - م – ط—refers to "the restful heart [that] does not worry" (القلب سكن ولم يقلق).[348] The definite adjective المطمأنّة, or "Tranquil", matches النفس's feminine case; and thus means, "the Tranquil Soul." 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rāzī defines the Arabic root—ن - م – ط—as سكن (which can also mean quiet, tranquil, etc.) further applying it to the heart (بمعنى على القلب).[349] Iṣfahānī writes that المطمئنّة's infinitive—الإطمئنان—means "the rest after the trouble" (السكون بعد الإنزعاج). The soul's Arabic adjective—المطمئنّة—then, generally refers to a person's heart (or soul)[350] finding a place of rest and quietness (i.e. tranquility) after passing through tumultuous situations.

Specifically, though, according to Islam's leading theologians, what does the phrase "Tranquil Soul" mean in Sūrat al-Fajr: 27? Rāzī reports that the Tranquil Soul is "stable" (الإستقرار), "steadfast" (الثبات), and "certain of the truth so [that] doubt does not pervade it" (متيقنة بالحقّ فلا يخالجها الشكّ). "Fear" and "sadness," then, cannot penetrate the Tranquil Soul's spiritual mode of operation.[351] Qurṭubī writes that the man whose soul is at rest does not concern himself with worldly things (الدنيا), but rather with Allah and his riches. Others define the Tranquil Soul as "peaceful in Allah's reward," or "pleased in Allah's qadar," and "certain about what Allah promises in his book."[352]

---

[348]Fayyūmī, *Al-Misbah Al-Munir*, 448.

[349]Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr Rāzī, *Mukhtar Al-Sihah* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Adab, 1998), 398.

[350]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 4:2707.

[351]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 16:160.

[352]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 20:39.

From the twelve other verses[353] containing derivatives ن - م – ط's Arabic root, two in particular inform how man achieves the Tranquil Soul's mode. Through "prayer" (الصلاة), "believing" (الايمان) in Allah, and "remembering" (الذكر) his name (Sūrat al-Nisā': 103; Sūrat al-Ra'd: 28), men's "hearts find rest" (تطمأنّ القلوب). Regarding Sūrat al-Ra'd: 28, Ibn Manẓūr writes, "When Allah was remembered in his oneness (وحدانيته), they believed in him not doubting." Truly, the Tranquil Soul abides in faith, humbling itself before Allah (اطمأنّت بالايمان وأخبتت لربّها).[354] Interestingly, Iṣfahānī also lists a verse illustrating men finding "rest" in worldly living and rejecting Allah's word (Sūrat Yūnus: 7).[355] Furthermore, Sūrat al-Ḥajj: 11 describes a man with marginal faith, "content" (اطمأنّ) with Allah's goodness, but falling away once hardship strikes.

After addressing the Tranquil Soul, Allah commands it: "Come back thou to thy Lord well pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him! (28) Enter thou, then among my Devotees! (29) Yea, enter thou my Heaven" (Sūrat al-Fajr: 28-30). Ibn Kathīr states that this passage's context happens at the time a faithful believer dies (عند الاحتضار). Moreover, it is the *soul* Allah speaks to at the time of the believer's death and on the Day of Resurrection.[356] Man's soul *begins* with Allah and *returns* to him for judgement. The Tranquil Soul, because it "pleases" and is "pleasing" to Allah, enters *jannah*.

---

[353]Sūrat al-Baqarah: 260; Sūrat al-'Imrān: 126; Sūrat al-Nisā': 103; Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 113; Sūrat al-Anfāl: 10; Sūrat Yūnus: 7; Sūrat al-Ra'd: 28; Sūrat al-Naḥl: 106, 112; Sūrat al-Isrā': 95; Sūrat al-Ḥajj: 11

[354]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 4:2707.

[355]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 458.

[356]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 7:290.

Prior to this, though, Ibn 'Abbās states that the phrase "Enter thou, then, among my Devotees", refers to men's "spirits . . . returning to [their bodies]".[357] This is due to the Arabic saying "Enter into my servants" (ادخلي في عبادي), whereby it is to the *nafs* that Allah directs his command (notice the feminine singular article "ي" suffixed to "ادخلي"). Many views that Rāzī puts forth affirm Allah speaking to the Tranquil Soul at the Day of Resurrection, i.e. the moment men's spirits[358] rejoin their bodies (بتقدُّم الارواح على الاجساد).[359]

The Tranquil Soul *pursues* Allah, directing its entire attention upon pleasing him. Man achieves this soul's first mode through steadfast faith. Specifically, he trusts in Allah's word, his qadar, his promises, and his heavenly rewards for obedience. The Tranquil Soul leads man to worship Allah; and only the Tranquil Soul enters *jannah* after it successfully survives Allah's judgement on the Day of Resurrection.

The Blaming Soul. "Every time an evil deed issues forth from it [soul]" (كلّما صدرت عنها سيّئة) and it responds by "rebuking itself" (تلوم نفسها), Jurjānī states, this portrays the Blaming Soul.[360] The Arabic phrase—النفس اللوّامة—occurs once in the Qur'an. Sūrat al-Qiyāmah: 2 says:

• وَلَآ أُقۡسِمُ بِٱلنَّفۡسِ ٱللَّوَّامَةِ (٢)

• And I do call to witness the self-reproaching spirit; (Eschew Evil). (2)

---

[357]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 20:39.

[358]Many Muslim theologians consider the نفس and the روح the same entity (Ibn Manẓūr, 6:4500; 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rāzī, 672; Iṣfahānī, 764).

[359]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 16:162.

[360]Jurjānī, *Al-Ta'rifat*, 252.

Comprehending this soul's operational mode begins by researching the Arabic root for "self-reproaching" (اللوّامة)—ل – و - م—and also delving into its qur'anic derivatives. "Self-reproaching" (or "blaming"), Al-Fayyūmī writes, is synonymous with عذل—"He reproved him (عذله) so he is blamed (ملوم) for a fault (النقص)".[361] 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rāzī agrees with al-Fayyūmī's definition, writing that عذل refers to a person "blaming" (لامه) someone for something he did.[362] Similar to Jurjānī, Iṣfahānī views the root ل – و - م conveying a sense of "alerting" or "cautioning" (تنبيها) someone.[363] Ibn Manẓūr states that ل – و - م means عنّفه, or giving someone "tough punishment" and "strong rebuke".[364]

These above definitions coincide with the Arabic root ل – و - م's thirteen other derivatives located in the Qur'an.[365] For example, Allah in Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 54 exhorts Muslims to "love" him and to treat the other believers respectfully. If they follow his orders, the verse continues, then these Muslims should "not fear the blame of any blamer" (ولا يخافون لومة لائم). Consequently, "blame" (لومة) in this verse refers to people disobeying Allah's word. In Sūrat Ibrāhīm: 22, Satan uses the verb for "blame" twice. To those who listen to Satan's lies on earth, he says, "So blame me not, but blame yourselves" (فلا تلوموني ولوموا أنفسكم). Meaning, when people realize Satan leads them astray by giving them false hope, in response they want to "blame" (تلوموني) someone else

---

[361]Fayyūmī, *Al-Misbah Al-Munir*, 680.

[362]Rāzī, *Mukhtar Al-Sihah*, 608.

[363]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 2:689.

[364]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 5:4101.

[365]Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 54; Sūrat Yūsuf: 32; Sūrat Ibrāhīm: 22; Sūrat al-'Isrā': 29, 39; Sūrat al-Mu'minūn: 6; Sūrat al-Ṣāfāt: 142; Sūrat al-Dhārīyat: 40, 54; Sūrat al-Qalam: 30; Sūrat al-Ma'ārij: 30

for their error rather than themselves (لوموا أنفسكم). One more example illustrates Allah rebuking Pharaoh for disbelieving in the signs he accomplished through Moses (Sūrat al-Dhārīyat: 40). Due to Pharaoh's rebelliousness, Allah calls him a "reprobate" or someone "worthy of blame" (مليم). Whether from م - و – ل's Arabic root or its usage in the Qur'an, "self-reproaching" (or "blaming") conveys a person "rebuking" someone for *wrongdoing*.

Concerning the Blaming Soul in Sūrat al-Qiyāmah: 2, though, many Muslim commentators allege that it "rebukes for its good and evil" (تلوم على الخير والشر). Others claim that النفس اللوّامة blames itself for neglecting things, resulting in regret (أنها تلوم على ما فات وتندم).[366] Ibn 'Abbās with his comment introduces the main debate over this verse's context, i.e. when exactly does Allah address the Blaming Soul, and does it belong to believers or unbelievers? He writes,

> Indeed, every soul blames itself on the Day of Resurrection whether [it is] righteous (برّة) or sinful (فاجرة). As for the righteous [soul] this is because it did not increase in its obedience (لم تزيد على طاعتها), and as for the sinful [soul] this is because it was not occupied with fearing Allah (أنها لم تشتغل بالتقوى).[367]

Due to Sūrat al-Qiyāmah: 1 "calling to witness the Resurrection Day", both Rāzī[368] and Ibn Kathīr[369] mention the Blaming Soul admonishing the believer for not giving more credence to his speech, the food he eats, or his treatment of others. The unbeliever, however, rebukes his soul on Judgment Day regretting its sinful tendencies.

---

[366]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 29:174.

[367]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 15:190.

[368]Ibid., 15:191.

[369]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 7:167.

Concerning whether the Blaming Soul indwells believers or unbelievers, diverse Muslim groups propose opposing views. Those lobbying against unbelievers argue their case based upon the soul's insensitivity to sin. This side wonders how the Blaming Soul can reside in a polluted environment impervious to truth. The other side responds by arguing that the Blaming Soul's presence inside a believer is incompatible with its internal design. Meaning, those on the path leading to *jannah* enjoy the Tranquil Soul; their lives are pure, thus, the Blaming Soul lacks any wrongdoing to reprove. They say, "Man only blames his soul for the irritation (الضجارة) and oppression (ضيق) of the heart, and that is not fitting for the people of *jannah* . . ."[370]

The Arabic root—م - و – ل —means to "reprove" or "blame" someone for wrongdoing. Its thirteen other derivatives in the Qur'an all affirm that the Arabic root—م - و – ل —refers to Allah, or a person, "blaming" someone for his *evil* behavior. The Blaming Soul in Sūrat al-Qiyāmah: 1 explicitly teaches that man's soul after committing misdeeds "rebukes" or "blames" itself for those sinful actions. In that no single person—believer or unbeliever—continuously remains in the Tranquil Soul's operational mode, every man experiences the Blaming Soul's rebuke.

The Commanding Soul. The soul's first operational mode, the Tranquil Soul, inclines man towards goodness. Also, when evil "issues forth" from man's soul, the Blaming Soul assumes its punitive role, reproving its sinful inclinations. The soul's third operational mode, the Commanding Soul, however, craves no goodness nor alerts man

---

[370]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 15:190.

about his wrongdoing. The Commanding Soul, rather, leads man to commit evil. Sūrat Yūsuf: 53 says:

• وما أبرئ نفسي إن النفس لأمارة بالسوء إلا ما رحم ربي إن ربي غفور رحيم (٥٣)

• Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human soul) certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (53)

Any discrepancies prevailing among Muslim theologians concerning this verse pertain to the *speaker* and *not* to the soul "prone to evil". This verse's grammar occurs in the first-person singular context. As a result, the usually ample Arabic feminine-masculine personal pronouns and verbs are absent. For this reason, commentators admit Sūrat Yūsuf: 53's obscurity, attributing its oration to either Yūsuf (Joseph) or King 'Azīz's wife (her exact name is never mentioned). The key to solving this dilemma depends upon the previous verse[371] which says: "This (say I), in order that he may know that I have never been false to him in his absence, and that Allah will never guide the snare of the false ones."

Those alleging these are Yūsuf's words point to King 'Azīz commanding his messenger (الرسول) to inquire Yūsuf (who is in prison) about the supposed immorality that happens between him and the queen. Upon the messenger's inquiry, Yūsuf absolves himself, pleading for the king to believe that he never betrays his trust outside of his presence. For those Muslims asserting that the king's *wife* speaks about the Commanding Soul, then it is her declaration in Sūrat Yūsuf: 51 which persuades them. In the queen's reply to the king she states: "Now is the truth manifest (to all): it was I who sought to seduce him from his (true) self: he indeed of those who are (ever) true (and virtuous)."

---

[371] Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 9:137.

Immediately after confessing Yūsuf's innocence, then, this Muslim group alleges the queen continues as the one speaking in Sūrat Yūsuf: 52-53, vowing to the king that she will never speak falsely of Yūsuf, even in his absence while he is in prison.[372] In the end, neither group's argument is conclusive, although, Yūsuf 'Ali writes that the "majority of Commentators construe 52-53 to be spoken by Joseph . . ."[373]

Not knowing the exact identity of the person speaking in Sūrat Yūsuf: 53, however, does not affect the commentators' abilities to define the Commanding Soul's meaning. Prior to presenting their comments, though, it is helpful to define two words directly connected to the Commanding Soul: "prone" (أمّارة) and "evil" (سوء). Following Yūsuf or the queen's statement—"nor do I absolve my own self (of blame)—the Arabic says "انّ النفس لامّارة بالسوء". A more literal translation reads "Indeed the soul is commanding evil". The word describing "soul" is أمّارة stemming from its noun أمر. Ibn Zakarīyah defines أمر as meaning "commanding (someone) to action" (افعل).[374] Iṣfahānī writes that أمر entails "charging [someone] to do something" (كلّفته أن يفعل شيئًا).[375] Yūsuf 'Ali, concerning *nafs*' adjective, writes that أمّارة means "prone, impelling, headstrong, passionate."[376]

---

[372]Ibid., 9:137-38.

[373]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 564.

[374]Zakariyya, *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah*, 1:137.

[375]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 1:29.

[376]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 564.

With respect to the second word—سوء (evil)—Ibn Zakarīyah defines it قُبح, meaning "loathsome" or "detestable".[377] 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rāzī refers to سوء as شرّ, or "evil".[378] Iṣfahānī elaborates further on سوء's meaning by writing, "it expresses about everything that is detestable" (عبّر عن كلّ ما يقبح).[379] Consequently, from a mere linguistic standpoint, the Commanding Soul *continually* incites and directs man to do detestable things. Jurjānī's definition of the Commanding Soul (النفس الامّارة) is more precise. It states:

> It is [that] which inclines (تميل) towards the physical body and commands [for] pleasures (لذّات) and sensual lusts (الشهوات الحسّية) attracting the heart to the lower side (الجهة السّفلية), the abode of evil deeds (مأوى الشرور) and the fountainhead of reprehensible morals (الاخلاق).[380]

Muslim theologians describe the Commanding Soul similarly. Abu Ja'far claims that the Commanding Soul belongs to believers (إنّ النفوس نفوس العباد) commanding them to lust after what it wants, which is against Allah's good pleasure (هواها غير ما فيه رضا الله).[381] One theological view supporting Yūsuf as Sūrat Yūsuf: 53's speaker, states that the Commanding Soul "inclines towards shameful deeds (القبائح) desiring disobedience [to Allah] (المعصية)." Rāzī further reports that "betrayal" (خيانة), "adultery" (زنا), and "pleasures," are part of the Commanding Soul's nature (الطبيعة توّاقان إلى اللذّات).[382] Due to the Commanding Soul's evil nature, Sūrat Yūsuf: 53 ends with a cry

---

[377]Zakariyya, *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah*, 3:113.

[378]Rāzī, *Mukhtar Al-Sihah*, 319.

[379]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 1:368.

[380]Jurjānī, *Al-Ta'rifat*, 252.

[381]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 13:1.

[382]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 9:125.

beseeching Allah for help, hoping for his merciful forgiveness. Yūsuf (or the queen) says, "unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

The Commanding Soul craves (مشتهية) evil. Its nature constitutes the Tranquil Soul's antithesis. Unbelievers and believers alike experience its aggressive pull towards shameful and detestable deeds. Consequently, only by Allah's mercy does man stand the chance to overcome its sinful inclinations.

This dissertation endeavors to prove that man's nature in Islam is dual: good *and* evil. The second chapter about *fiṭrah* demonstrates man's internal goodness. The Tranquil Soul's nature *further* resounds with *fiṭrah's* essence, reaffirming that man's nature in Islam is good. Evil, however, also dwells in man's nature. Its *source* derives from the Commanding Soul. The following five passages from the Qur'an illustrate this reality.

Example #1. In the following verse Allah reminds man that he is the Creator, and because of this, knows the soul's secret thoughts, particularly the evil ones. Sūrat Qāf: 16 states:

• ولقد خلقنا ٱلإنسن ونعلم ما توسوس به نفسه ۖ ونحن أقرب إليه من حبل ٱلوريد (١٦)

• It was We who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein. (16)

This *sūrah's* context gradually leads to Allah's dreaded Judgment Day when he exposes men's good and evil ways,[383] and this particular verse foreshadows its crescendo starting with the soul's "dark suggestions". Translations other than Yūsuf

---

[383]Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*, 1345.

'Ali's (e.g. Ṣaḥīḥ International and Pickthal) render "dark suggestions his soul makes to him," as "what his soul whispereth to him". After comparing the two English versions, one wonders which verb in Sūrat Qāf: 16 convinces Yūsuf 'Ali to associate "dark suggestions" with man's soul?

The answer appears in the rare and quite unique quad-letter Arabic root و – س – و - س. "توسوس" in Sūrat Qāf: 16 is a Form I verb occurring in the feminine-singular case matching the soul's feminine-singular-nominative noun (توسوس به نفس). It is true that the Arabic root's—و – س – و - س—most basic meaning refers to a "whisper." For example, Ibn Zakarīyah defines و – س – و - س as a "sound not raised" (صوت غير رافع), referring to somebody speaking in a soft voice.[384] However, sources defining the Arabic root—و – س – و - س—and its derivatives *unanimously* include other information linking توسوس to the soul's evil intra-exchange. Iṣfahānī defines the noun الوسوسة as "destructive thought" (الخطرة الرديئة).[385] "When evil comes by the heart and when there is no good in it [this is] وسواس", Fayumi writes. He continues to state (along with 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rāzī[386] and Ibn Manẓūr[387]) that وسوس, the Form I verb, refers to the soul's *evil* dialogue within man and also to Satan's deceptive lies.

The reason Muslim theologians choose to define توسوس negatively arises from its primary qur'anic usage. Meaning, other than its occurrence in Sūrat Qāf: 16, وسوس

---

[384]Zakariyya, *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah*, 6:76.

[385]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 2:819.

[386]Rāzī, *Mukhtar Al-Sihah*, 722.

[387]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 6:4830-831.

directly describes the evil that Satan advises man to commit. The first two instances in the Qur'an where Satan illustrates this devious role happen in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve.

Due to Satan's (الشيطان) arrogance (تكبُّر), Allah casts him from *jannah* (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 13). In response, Satan resolves to "assault them [Adam and Eve] from before them and behind them" (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 17), by "whispering" (فوسوس لهما) evil temptations to them, desiring that they disobey Allah by eating from the Tree of Eternity (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 20). Sūrat al-A'rāf: 22 equates Satan's وسوس to "deceit" (غرور), causing evil (سوء) to take place in Adam and Eve's lives. Another narrative recounting Satan's وسوس in the Garden of Eden occurs in Sūrat Ṭāh: 120, which says: "But Satan whispered evil to him [Adam] . . ." As in the previous account, because of Satan's evil "whispers," Adam disobeys Allah. The final two occurrences the Arabic root— و – س – و - س — appears in the Qur'an are in the last chapter. Sūrat al-Nās: 4-6 says "From the mischief of the Whisperer (of evil), who withdraws (after his whisper)—(the same) who whispers into the hearts of Mankind—among Jinns and among Men." Thus, Satan in this passage not only "whispers", but is known as *the* "Whisperer" (الوسواس).

Synthesizing the above information, وسوس's qur'anic witness communicates evil. This is the reason Qurṭubī lists various Muslim theologians defining the phrase—"and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him"—and particularly the verb وسوس, negatively. One of them writes:

> [It is] what pervades the innermost secrets of his heart and conscience (ما يختلج في سرّه وقلبه وضميره، وفي هذا زجر عن المعاصي التي يستخفي بها), and in this is the holding back of [admitting] sins which he keeps hidden by it [the soul] . . . Indeed, the desired meaning of 'man' is Adam; and that which his soul

> whispered to him [was about eating] the food from the tree, [which refers] generally to his [Adam's] progeny (ثمّ هو عامّ لولده). And الوسوسة is the conversation of the soul by way of hidden speech.[388]

This quote affirms that the Commanding Soul's role, just like Satan's, "whispers" evil suggestions inside of man, and also hides from Allah the sins it commits. Moreover, Adam's Commanding Soul inciting evil is not unique to him alone, but common to "his progeny". Ibn Kathīr summarizes Sūrat Qāf: 16 with a more balanced, dual-capacity type commentary. He states that:

> Allah informs man about his power over him, and that his work encompasses all of his (man's) matters, knowing what the sons of Adam's souls whisper from good and evil (توسوس به نفوس بني أدم من الخير والشر).[389]

One of the rare traditions mentioning وسوس, records a man approaching the prophet Muḥammad asking him for advice about what to do concerning the terrible thoughts in his soul (في نفسه). Islam's leader replies "Praise be to Allah, [for the one] who attributes his deceit (ردّ كيده إلى) to الوسوسة." Ibn al-Athīr, concerning this tradition, writes that the soul's الوسوسة is responsible for the man's deceitful thoughts, and thus, his ensuing mental turmoil. In fact, it also seems like the prophet Muḥammad in this tradition praises the man for taking responsibility for his evil thoughts rather than blaming outside influences for their existence.[390]

Ibn al-Athīr's comments are similar to Qurṭubī's whereby he *separates* the soul's evil whispering from Satan's. Indeed, Satan dedicates his efforts towards tempting

---

[388]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 17:8.

[389]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 6:319.

[390]Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Nihayah Fi Gharib Al-Hadith Wa-Al-Athar*, 973.

man through issuing evil suggestions. Yet, man's Commanding Soul in Sūrat Qāf: 16 *also* lures man into evil by giving him "dark suggestions" (توسوس).

Logically, then, Allah ends this revelation by reminding man how deep his divine power penetrates the human soul's innermost secrets. On Judgment Day, man lacks the ability to cover up his soul's evil because Allah is "nearer to him than (his) jugular vein." Just as the "jugular vein" penetrates man's innermost being, i.e. his heart,[391] Allah's knowledge about man's الوسوسة goes deeper.

In a verse foreshadowing Judgement Day, Allah reminds man that he knows the soul's "dark suggestions". The Qur'an teaches that Satan, beginning with Adam, "whispers" evil suggestions to man, luring him to disobey Allah. Man's soul, however, *shares* the exact same verb (وسوس) that the Qur'an uses for Satan's evil temptations. Man's soul, then, like Satan, inclines man to evil.

Example #2. The first example teaches that the Commanding Soul tempts man to commit evil. This next example imparts an equally significant fact: the Commanding Soul serves as man's *source* of evil. Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 35-41 says:

• يوْم يتذكّرُ ٱلإنسـنُ ما سعى (٣٥) وبُرّزت ٱلجحيمُ لمن يرى (٣٦) فأمّا من طغى (٣٧) وءاثر ٱلحيوة ٱلدُّنيا (٣٨) فإنّ ٱلجحيم هى ٱلمأوى (٣٩) وأمّا منْ خاف مقام ربّهٖ ونهى ٱلنّفْس عن ٱلهوى (٤٠) فإنّ ٱلجنّة هى ٱلمأوى (٤١)

• The Day when Man shall remember (all) that he strove for (35) And Hell-Fire shall be placed in full view for (all) to see— (36) Then, for such as had transgressed all bounds, (37) And had preferred the life of this world, (38) The Abode will be Hell-Fire; (39) And for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's (tribunal) and had restrained (their) soul from lower Desires, (40) Their Abode will be the Garden. (41)

Allah in this passage clearly sets forth the conditions man must attain on Judgment Day in order to enter into heaven or "the Garden" (الجنّة).

---

[391] Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 17:8.

The divine stipulations for avoiding the fire (النار) are unambiguous: 1) do not "transgress all bounds", 2) do not "prefer the life of this world", and 3) "restrain [your] soul from lower desires". More specifically, Rāzī explains that this passage contains two verse-pairs in apposition to verse forty. In the first pair, verse forty's initial segment "And for such as had entertained the fear of standing before their Lord's (tribunal)", contrasts verse thirty-seven: "Then, for such as had transgressed all bounds". Continuing to the second pair, verse forty's latter segment "and had restrained (their) soul from lower Desires", opposes verse thirty-eight: "And had preferred the life of this world".[392] Furthermore, due to Sahl saying, "Abandoning desire (ترك الهوى) is the key to *jannah*",[393] verse forty's latter segment deserves special scrutiny.

To fully understand the segment—"and had restrained (their) soul from lower Desires"—two Arabic words demand study: نهى ("had restrained") and الهوى ("lower desires"). In Sahl's above quote, he claims that it is contingent upon man to "abandon desire" in order to enter *jannah*. Unfortunately, he makes a colossal theological oversight with this comment. This is because Allah *does not* say in Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 40-41 that man must "abandon desire" to go to heaven, but rather he must "نهى النفس عن الهوى", or "restrain the soul from desire". In other words, man's crucial problem that he must solve in order to attain *jannah* is "restraining" his *own soul* from desiring the things of this world.

---

[392]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 16:48.

[393]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 19:135.

Penrice defines the Form I masculine-singular verb, نهى, as "to forbid, interdict, prohibit, [and] hinder."[394] Iṣfahānī writes that نهى means "The suppression of something" (الزجر عن الشيء).[395] Two verses Iṣfahānī includes to illustrate نهى's imperative force are Sūrat al-A'rāf: 20 and Sūrat al-Naḥl: 90. In the former verse that also includes the previously studied verb وسوس, Satan, speaking to Adam and Eve, says "Your Lord only forbade (نهاكما) you this tree". In this specific context, Satan uses نهى to refer to the time when Allah commands Adam and Eve to not eat from the tree. The latter verse recapitulates نهى's imperative element by again forbidding man from disobeying Allah. Sūrat al-Naḥl: 90 says, "Allah commands (يأمر) justice, the doing of good . . . and He forbids (ينهى) all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion . . ." Concerning نهى's use in Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 40 and man's lifelong duty to restrain the soul, Iṣfahānī writes:

> It does not mean that he [man] says to his soul: Do not do such-and-such, but he wants to repress it (قمعها) from its lusts (شهواتها) and push it [away] from what it proceeds toward and is concerned about.[396]

The above definitions for نهى reveal that man must aggressively counter his soul's evil inclinations in order to restrain it. Restrain the soul from what, though? Yūsuf 'Ali's English translation answers this question with the phrase "lower desires" for the noun الهوى. Although "lower desires" does not entirely mask الهوى's full meaning, more in-depth inspection discloses the Commanding Soul's level of depravity that man must constantly "repress".

---

[394]Penrice, *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*, 151.

[395]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 2:773.

[396]Ibid.

الهوى derives from the Arabic root—ه – و - ى. It is in the infinitive case and its plural form is أهواء,[397] meaning "desire(s)" or "lust(s)". From a research standpoint it is important to note that all sources studied do not fail to make a direct link between الهوى and النفس. For example, Jurjānī's definition for الهوى says: "The soul's inclination (ميّال) towards what the lusts delight in without need of [Allah's] law" (تستلذه الشهوات من غير داعيات الشرع).[398] It seems that Yūsuf 'Ali's translation—"lower desires"—finds confirmation with Jurjānī's definition. Meaning, the soul's هوى focuses on lowly, worldly delights, avoiding Allah's higher purposes. Fayyūmī writes that الهوى alludes to the "soul's inclination and its distortion (انحرافها) towards something". One sentence later Fayyūmī labels the soul's inclination as "reprehensible" (مذموم).[399] Moreover, the "desire of the soul" (هوى النفس), Ibn Zakarīyah writes, "is void of all good" (خال من كلّ الخير).[400] Ibn Manẓūr comments specifically about الهوى in Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 40, writing that man must "restrain it [the soul] from its lusts and what it calls for from the sins (against) Allah" (ما تدعو إليه من معاصي الله). [401]

The Qur'an's testimony agrees with the above Muslim theologians' هوى definitions. In fact, fifty percent of the time that هوى occurs in the Qur'an, its meaning emphasizes man's personal ownership of his lust and "lowly desires." Sūrat al-A'rāf: 176 says, "And had We willed We could have raised him by their means, but he clung to

---

[397]Rāzī, *Mukhtar Al-Sihah*, 702.

[398]Jurjānī, *Al-Ta'rifat*, 258.

[399]Fayyūmī, *Al-Misbaḥ Al-Munir*.

[400]Zakariyya, *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah*, 6:16.

[401]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 6:4728.

the earth and followed his own lust (هواه) . . ." Likewise, Sūrat al-Kahf: 28 says, ". . . and obey not him whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance, who followeth his own lust (هواه) . . ." Another example from Sūrat Ṭaha: 16 says, "Therefore, let not him turn thee aside from (the thought of) it who believeth and therein but followeth his own desire (هواه), lest thou perish." Thus, الهوى's sinful desires belong to man, and the Qur'an teaches that *the soul* is the place they emanate.

Jalālayn writes that the soul in Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 40 is the Commanding Soul, the third operational mode. Precisely, his commentary says that "نهى النفس" refers to "الامّارة",[402] or The Commanding Soul from Sūrat Yūsuf: 53. Ṭabarī explains that Allah hates (يكره الله) the soul's evil desires, and therefore man needs to hinder it.[403] Rāzī comments that the only means by which man is able to drive away the soul's evil desires is by fearing Allah (الخوف من الله هو السبب المعين لدفع الهوى).[404] Indeed, Allah commands man to tame his soul's incessant lusts. Unless man succeeds in restraining it, his "abode" on Judgment Day becomes Hell's fire.

Man's "key to *jannah*" derives from his ability to drive away the soul's evil desires. Due to the Commanding Soul's sinful inclinations, man must equally reciprocate by actively fighting against them through fearing Allah.

Example #3. The Commanding Soul deceives man by making evil look good. The patriarch Jacob and his sons give an example of this in Sūrat Yūsuf: 17-18.

---

[402] Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 584.

[403] Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami` Al-Bayan*, 30:48.

[404] Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 16:48.

• قالوا يـٰأبانا إنا ذهبنا نستبق وتركنا يوسف عند متـٰعنا فأكله الذئب وما أنت بمؤمن لنا ولو كنا صـٰدقين (١٧) وجاءو على قميصه بدم كذب قال بل سولت لكم أنفسكم أمرا فصبر جميل والله المستعان على ما تصفون (١٨)

• They said: "Oh our father! we went racing with one another, and left Joseph with our things: and the wolf devoured him. But thou wilt never believe us even though we tell the truth." (17) They stained his shirt with false blood. He said: "Nay but your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you. (For me) patience is most fitting: against that which ye assert, it is Allah (alone) whose help can be sought"... (18)

Attempting to convince their father that a wolf kills Joseph, Ṭabarī writes that Jacob's sons "lied to him" (مكذّبًا له).[405] They "stained his [Joseph's] shirt with false blood" and brought it to Jacob, but Allah by his help and kindness, shows him the truth (يفرّجه الله بعونه ولطفه).[406] Jacob then exposes their falsehood by revealing to them the source of their deceit. He declares, "Nay but your minds have made up a tale (that may pass) with you . . ." Yūsuf 'Ali's English translation leaves room for correction. A more literal rendering reads, "Nay but your souls have contrived for you [this] matter" (بل سوّلت أنفسكم أمرًا). It is clear that "souls" (أنفس) is the subject of "contrived" (سوّلت), because "souls" is in the nominative case. Hence, the Qur'an connects another Arabic verb—سوّلت—characterizing the soul's activity within man.

Fayyūmī writes that سوّلت means to beautify something (زيّنت),[407] with the goal to present a matter in a more favorable light. Ibn Zakarīyah,[408] 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rāzī,[409] and most Muslim commentators agree with Fayyūmī's definition. Others add extra detail to سوّلت's definition. For example, Ibn Manẓūr defines سوّلت as أغوى, meaning to "seduce"

---

[405]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 13:165.

[406]Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 4:15.

[407]Fayyūmī, *Al-Misbah Al-Munir*, 351.

[408]Zakariyya, *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah*, 3:118.

[409]Rāzī, *Mukhtar Al-Sihah*, 322.

or "entice."[410] Iṣfahānī gives the greatest detail in his definition. He writes that تزيين (the Form II infinitive) refers to "something the soul is bent on (تزيين النفس لما تحريص) [by] representing [something] detestable . . . [through using] a good image (تصوير القبيح . . . بصورة الحسن)."[411] In other words, سوّلت refers to man's soul trying to get its way by deceitfully making its request appear better than it actually is.

With regards to Jacob's sons in Sūrat Yūsuf: 18, they dislike Joseph and want to get rid of him. Explaining to Jacob that a wolf ate Joseph, rather than admitting to selling him (Sūrat Yūsuf: 19-20) to "travelers", is their attempt at making their detestable desires appear favorable. The verse and commentary are straightforward; men's souls "contrive" this horrible act. In fact, Iṣfahānī acknowledges that the sinful acts Jacob's sons commit are the product of the Commanding Soul's evil (أي ما تأمر النفس الامّارة بسوء).[412]

Interestingly, the Form II verb—سوّل—occurs once in the Qur'an where it is not connected to man's soul. In this instance, Satan is its subject. Sūrat al-Muḥammad: 25 says,

> Lo! Those who turn back after the guidance hath been manifested unto them, Satan hath seduced them (الشيطان سوّل لهم) . . .

This verse teaches that those people who hear the Qur'an's message (Sūrat al-Muḥammad: 24) and yet still disbelieve are under Satan's influence. He "seduces" (سوّل) them by making worldly things appear more beautiful than Allah's beauty. It is significant to mention that the Qur'an illustrates both man's soul *and* Satan "seducing"

---

[410]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 3:2157.

[411]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 363.

[412]Ibid., 1:30.

humans to commit evil. They are not one in the same, but separate. This theological principle in the Qur'an holds true for the verb وسوس as well, in that man's soul *and* Satan constantly give man "dark suggestions", encouraging sinning against Allah.

Sūrat Yūsuf: 17-18 illustrates man's soul "contriving" lies in order to achieve its evil desires. Man's soul accomplishes this by framing evil with good; and it is not alone, Satan is the Commanding Soul's consort.

Example #4. This next example demonstrating the Commanding Soul's evil also uses the verb سوّلت. In Sūrat Yūsuf: 18, سوّلت refers to the Commanding Soul "contriving" lies in order to deceive Jacob that a wolf kills Joseph. In the next example, the Commanding Soul causes the Israelites to forsake Allah and worship idols. Sūrat Ṭaha: 95-96 says:

• قال فما خطْبُك يٰسٰمرِيُّ (٩٥) قال بصُرْتُ بما لمْ يبْصُرُوا بهٖ فقبضْتُ قبْضةً مّنْ أثرِ ٱلرَّسُول فنبذْتُها وكذٰلك سوّلتْ لى نفْسى (٩٦)
• (Moses) said: "What then is thy case O Samiri?" (95) He replied: "I saw what they saw not: so I took a handful (of dust) from the footprint of the Messenger, and threw it (into the calf): thus did my soul suggest to me." (96)

Due to the previous example's information given about the verb سوّلت, this verse's main concern hones in on the passage's context and commentary. Starting in Sūrat Ṭaha: 83, the qur'anic narrative introduces Moses (موسى) in Allah's presence on the "Mount". Two verses later Allah informs Moses that Sāmirī (السامري)[413] "led" the Israelites astray. After descending the mountain to understand what happened, Moses initially questions the Israelites asking them why they "broke [their] promise" to Allah by

---

[413]It is possible that Sāmirī is Egyptian and joined the Israelites' exodus (Yūsuf 'Ali, 781).

worshiping the golden calf. They quickly deny wrongdoing, placing the blame fully upon Sāmirī. The Israelites answer Moses (Sūrat Ṭaha: 87-88),

> . . . But we were made to carry the weight of the ornaments of the (whole) people, and we threw them (into the fire), and that was what the Sāmirī suggested. Then he brought out (of the fire) before the (people) the image of a calf: it seemed to low: so they said: 'This is your god, and the god of Moses . . .

Upon hearing the people's answer and after interrogating Aaron, Moses asks Sāmirī why he orders the Israelites to make the golden calf as an idol for them to worship. Commentators agree that Sāmirī's response to Moses contains both confusion and clarity. Confusion with regards to Sāmirī claiming to have seen something not visible to the Israelites; and as a result, he throws "dust" from the "Messenger's" footprint into the molten calf concoction. What exactly Sāmirī alleges to see remains unclear. Some Muslim theologians surmise that the Messenger (الرسول) represents the angel Gabriel who then gives Sāmirī special knowledge directing him to leave Moses' counsel. Other scholars claim that Sāmirī's horse (that he was on) made a special footprint (تراب حافر فرسه الذي كان عليه يصلح). When Sāmirī sees the footprint, he grabs some of it from the dirt, and then throws it into the cauldron being used to make the golden calf.[414] Rāzī provides many examples of commentators disproving these two theories. Essentially, their premise argues that if Sāmirī indeed receives special knowledge from Gabriel or sees something supernatural in the footprint, and if what Sāmirī sees comes from Allah, then it would not have countered Moses' prophethood and led the Israelites into idol worship.[415]

---

[414]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 16:205.

[415]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 11:87.

Commentators are not confused, however, about what *causes* Sāmirī to stray from Allah and Moses' guidance. The responsibility, they say, rests with man's soul. Sāmirī's soul (حدّثته نفسه), Ṭabarī reports, results in the Israelites' idolatry and also the alleged vision.[416] Thus, Sāmirī "did what [his] soul called him to do" (فعلته ما دعتني إليه), and no one is responsible for what happens other than him; he simply follows his lust (بل اتّبعت هواي فيه) in this matter.[417]

Sāmirī's soul in Sūrat Ṭaha: 95-96 demonstrates its spiritually destructive nature. According to Sāmirī's words, his soul "suggested" (سوّلت) that he do something which ends up leading himself and the Israelites away from Allah. This poses two problematic scenarios: 1) either Sāmirī's soul convinces him that Allah gives him the false vision, or 2) his soul "contrives" lies in order to justify his lack of faith and idolatry before Moses. Notwithstanding, the Qur'an's text places full blame upon the Commanding Soul's evil.

Example #5. Man's soul from humanity's onset leads humans to commit murder. Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30 illustrates this:

• فطوّعت لهُ نفسهُ قتل أخيه فقتلهُ فأصبح من ٱلخسرين (٣٠)

• The (selfish) soul of the other led him to the murder of his brother: he murdered him and became (himself) one of the lost ones. (30)

The first man to ever die among the human race, Jalālayn writes, is Able (هابيل).[418] His brother Cain (قابيل) murders him. 'Abd Allah records the prophet

---

[416]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 16:206.

[417]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 11:97.

[418]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 112.

Muḥammad declaring Able's death an injustice (ظلمًا).[419] Allah in Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30 attributes Able's murder to Cain's soul. Yūsuf 'Ali's translation adequately defines the Arabic phrase: "The (selfish) soul of the other [Cain] led him to the murder of his brother [Able]" Indeed, the English indicts the soul for Able's murder, however, studying the Arabic verb for "led him" or طوّعت, produces a more precise account of the soul's evil inclinations. Moreover, there is no Arabic adjective describing the soul as "selfish" (that is why Yūsuf 'Ali places it between parentheses); thus, the single method available to apprehend the soul's activity in this verse is by researching its verb طوّعت.

The Arabic phrase "فطوّعت له نفسه قتل أخيه" literally means: "His [Cain's] soul led him (طوّعت له) to murder his brother". طوّعت derives from the Arabic root— ط – و - ع—with its Form I verb meaning to "obey" (طاع) voluntarily (طوعًا).[420] Form II of ط – و - ع in a sense renders طوّعت's meaning: "made you obey". *Lisān al-'Arab* lists numerous verbs depicting طوّعت's exact meaning in Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30. They are: سهّلت—made (murder) easy (for him); رخّصت—authorized (murder for him); فعّلت من الطوع—made (him) obey (murder); شجّعت—encouraged (him in murder); أعانت—helped (him murder); and سمحت—allowed (him to murder). *Lisān al-'Arab* commenting on Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30, says: ". . . His [Cain's] soul caused him [to murder Able] by its [the soul's] lust (أي جعلت نفسه بهواها)".[421] Iṣfahānī defines طوّعت, "authorized (it)" (رخّصت), and then adds that in Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30 Cain's murderous act reflects man's nature (قريحته). Yūsuf 'Ali's

---

[419]Al-Bukhari, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, 1396, #7321.

[420]Fayyūmī, *Al-Misbah Al-Munir*, 450.

[421]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 4:2720.

translation for طوّعت renders "led him" in the English. From the above definitions, however, "led him" fails to draw out طوّعت's aggressive nature. Meaning, man's soul in Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30 does not merely "lead" Cain to kill his brother, but instead actively "encourages" him to do it.

Muslim commentators agree with the above طوّعت definitions. They also use the verbs سهّلت and شجّعت to explain Cain's premeditated crime.[422] Not surprisingly, they also use the verb وسوس, or "dark suggestions", to explain how the soul "led" Cain to kill Able. They write:

> When the soul produced many kinds of its dark suggestions [to Cain], the act [murder] became easy for him, as if the soul by its astonishing dark suggestions made him obey (فكأنّ النفس جعلت بوساوس العجيبة هذا الفعل المطيع) . . .[423]

Reiterating Iṣfahānī's remark, other commentators affirm that Able's murder was due to *his nature*. One theologian writes, "Indeed Cain knew killing by his nature (يعرف القتل بطبعه); because man if he has not seen killing, then he knows by his nature that the soul is perishing and it is possible to destroy it [the soul]".[424] Not only do these two quotes confirm the soul's *responsibility* for mankind's first murder, but they also illustrate that some Muslim theologians link man's *nature* to the Commanding Soul's evil.

Cain chooses to obey his soul when he murders Able. As retribution, Allah in Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30 declares him "one of lost ones" (فأصبح من الخاسرين). For the rest of

---

[422]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 6:164.

[423]Ibid.

[424]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 6:92.

his life, Cain bears the painful consequences of his actions.[425] He has no one to blame except the Commanding Soul.

Analysis. Allah creates man's soul with deliberate balance, inspiring in its essence the capacity for both good *and* evil. Consistent with the soul's dual capacity principle is the soul's three operational modes: 1) the Tranquil Soul, 2) the Blaming Soul, and 3) the Commanding Soul. The Tranquil Soul pursues faith by obeying Allah. Its nature is good. When wrongdoing occurs the Blaming Soul takes over by alerting and rebuking man. Its nature is also good. The Commanding Soul, however, incites man to commit every detestable deed. It accomplishes this in man by "whispering" evil temptations, by making evil look good, and by making evil easy to commit. Unless man successfully restrains the Commanding Soul, he will suffer painful consequences on earth, and then go to Hell on Judgment Day. The Commanding Soul's nature is evil.

Defining *Nafs* from its Primary Writers over Islamic History

The Qur'an reveals the soul's dual capacity which is consistent with its three modes. The Commanding Soul, in particular, shows the soul's evil nature. Since Islam's advent numerous Muslim scholars have also written books expanding the qur'anic understanding about the soul. This third section highlights three of the most prominent writers who wrote about the soul over Islamic history: 1) Ghazālī (d. 1111), 2) Rāzī (d. 1209), and 3) Ibn Qayyim (d. 1350).[426] In similar fashion to the previous section, the

---

[425]Al-Mahalli and Al-Suyuti, *Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*, 112.

[426]Duncan Black Macdonald, "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam: Part Ii," *The Moslem World* v22, no. 2 (1932): 166.

writer mostly selects information from these authors connecting the soul to its dual capacity and evil inclinations.

al-Ghazālī (d.1111)

Ghazālī was a devout Muslim striving to know Allah and man's essence.[427] One of the greatest works he produces to achieve this goal is *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (*Revival of the Religious Sciences*). In this monumental work, Ghazālī expounds upon Islam's core beliefs and man's relationship to them. In a chapter titled "Explaining the Wonders of the Heart" (كتاب شرح عجائب القلب), Ghazālī gives theological and philosophical instruction directly and indirectly relating to the *nafs*. The following three sub-sections discuss the soul's role in man and where evil originates: the heart, the kingdom, and the *waswasah*.

The heart. The noblest honor Allah bestows upon humans compared to the rest of creation encapsulates man's divine design to know him. Allah prepares man for this privileged relationship, expecting him to rise above the plant and animal worlds to pursue faith. When man does this, Ghazālī writes, he discovers "his beauty (جماله), perfection (كماله), and glory (فخره)".[428] The precise locus, however, providing the strategic headquarters for this divine exchange between man and Allah, Ghazālī calls "the heart" (القلب). In greater detail, Ghazālī writes:

---

[427]Abu Hamid Muhammad Al-Ghazali, *Al-Ghazzali on Knowing Yourself and God*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, trans. Muhammad Nur Abdus Salam, 14th ed. (Chicago, IL: Great Books of the Islamic World, Inc., 2010), 7.

[428]Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din*, 876.

> The heart is [what] knows Allah (العالم بالله), it draws near to Allah (المتقرّب إلى الله), it works for Allah (العامل لله), it pursues Allah (الساعي إلى الله), it reveals Allah and what he has (المكاشف بما عند الله ولديه), man's works are only followers, servants, and instruments which the heart uses . . . like an owner [with] a servant and a shepherd [with] the flock . . . the heart is accepted with Allah [but] if it is not with Allah it becomes veiled from Allah (إذا سُلِّم من غير الله وهو المحجوب عن الله) . . .[429]

The sum-total of man's essence, most especially his potential to draw near to Allah and turn away from him, transpires in the heart. Man by his heart can choose obedience (طاعة) or rebellion (تمرُّد). It soars with the angels (الملائكة) or revels with demons (الشياطين); and this is why Ghazālī states, "If man knows it [his heart] he knows himself, and if he knows himself then he knows his Lord".[430] Ghazālī, consequently, wanting his readers to know their Lord, expends great effort communicating the heart's components: the spirit, the soul, and the intellect.

According to Ghazālī, mystery surrounds the spirit (الروح) because Islam's leader abstains from speaking about it.[431] Starting from a mere physical standpoint, Ghazālī describes the heart's "black blood" (دمٌ اسود) as the "spring of the spirit" (منبع الروح). Meaning, the spirit fuses with the blood, giving man the "lights of life" (أنوار الحياة), or the five senses. The spirit's life-giving properties, like a lamp, illuminate man's inner-self, enabling the heart to pump and warm. Regarding its relationship with the heart's all-encompassing role, the spirit's presence flowing through man empowers him to know Allah.[432] The spirit by which Ghazālī places within the heart's domain, occurs once in the Qur'an. Allah says in Sūrat al-Isrā': 85:

---

[429]Ibid.

[430]Ibid.

[431]Ibid., 877.

[432]Ibid., 878.

> They ask thee concerning the Spirit (of inspiration). Say: "The Spirit (cometh) by command of my Lord of knowledge it is only a little that is communicated to you (O men!) (ويسئلونك عن ٱلرُّوحِۖ قُلِ ٱلرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّى وَمَآ أُوتِيتُم مِّنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلاً)

In response to this verse, Ghazālī writes, Allah's "divine command [concerning the spirit] is remarkable, [nonetheless] most minds are incapable from attaining its essence (تعجز أكثر العقول عن درك حقيقته)."[433]

The *nafs* also works within the heart's command center and according to Ghazālī manifests man's essence (هي الانسان بالحقيقة). The Ṣūfī's stance (التصوُّف), Ghazālī writes, asserts that man's soul lacks redeeming qualities. "Anger" (غضب) and "lust's (شهوة) power" fill man's soul with every "reprehensible attribute" (الصفات المذمومة من الانسان).[434] For this reason, Ṣūfī's exhaust themselves "striving against the soul' (مجاهدة النفس), trying to "break it" (كسرها); viewing it as their number one foe.[435] The non-Ṣūfī belief (which is Ghazālī's view) displays a higher regard for the *nafs* due to its three different operational modes (أحوال).

The peaceful soul submits to Allah's command and "opposes lusts" (معارضة الشهوات); this is what Ghazālī defines as the Tranquil Soul (Sūrat al-Fajr: 27-28; النفس المطمئنّة). In contrast to the Ṣūfī's wholly negative outlook on the soul, Ghazālī believes that the Tranquil Soul can achieve goodness, resulting with Allah ushering it into *jannah*. When the soul lacks peace (سكون), though, and begins battling the lustful soul (النفس الشهوانية) for "diminishing man's worship of his Lord" (تقصيره في عبادة مولاه), this is what

---

[433]Ibid.

[434]Ibid.

[435]Ibid.

Ghazālī names the Blaming Soul (النفس اللوّامة; Sūrat al-Qiyāmah: 2).[436] Concerning the soul's third mode (النفس الامّارة), Ghazālī writes:

> If it [the soul] stops opposing (تركت الاعتراض) and gives in . . . obeying according to the lusts and accusations of Satan, it is named the Commanding Soul to evil . . .[437]

Ghazālī, commenting on Sūrat Yūsuf: 53, acknowledges that Joseph or the king's wife recites this verse, but to him the point is moot. Man's soul has an operational mode that commands him to do evil. Notice, however, in the quote's second half, *who* Ghazālī accredits the soul's lusts—Satan. This point receives greater attention in the third subsection titled "The Waswasah."

The heart also acquires knowledge (علم). Ghazālī names the heart's command center, the intellect (العقل). The intellect is the "place of comprehension" (محلّ الادراك), an intangible "existence" (وجود) within the heart distinguishing humanity from plant and animal life. Compared to the rest of Allah's creation, through the intellect humans can *know* (عالم), store, and process information.

Allah creates man to know him. According to Ghazālī, man's unique design enables him to share a relationship with Allah, and this occurs in the heart. The heart's three-fold composition contains the spirit, soul, and intellect. Ghazālī teaches that the spirit gives life and breath to man's body. The soul either leads man towards Allah through its good, or away from him by its evil. By the intellect humans know and process information.

---

[436]Ibid.

[437]Ibid.

The kingdom. Illustrating the heart's inner-pragmatics, Ghazālī creates an allegory. Ghazālī names it "The Soul of Man in His Body" (نفس الانسان في بدنه). Before commencing the allegory, however, he defines some of its terms. There are five soldiers in this parable, Ghazālī explains: 1) anger (الغضب), 2) lust (الشهوة), 3) knowledge (العلم), 4) wisdom (الحكمة), and 5) contemplation (التفكُّر).[438]

Even though the heart controls the first two soldiers—anger & lust—Ghazālī writes:

> They might revolt (يستعصيان) against it [the heart] with great injustice and rebellion until they possess it and enslave it . . . destroying it (هلاكه) and cutting it off (انقطاعه) from its journey . . . to eternal happiness (سعادة الأبد).[439]

All five soldiers belong to the "party of Allah" (حزب الله), but the first two soldiers, anger and lust, join the "party of Satan" (حزب الشيطان) whenever the heart ceases seeking Allah's help. Unfortunately, Ghazālī says, *most* people subject themselves to their lusts rather than placing their evil desires under the intellect's control.[440]

In Ghazālī's allegory, the soul represents a king and the body its kingdom. The king has currency to spend and powers to deploy, but before he uses these valuable assets he should seek prudent counsel from the Wise Minister (الوزير العاقل). As is common in every kingdom, mutiny lurks; and unbeknownst to the king, treachery awaits his kingdom through an evil slave (the Commanding Soul) which constantly delivers to it provisional food. More specifically, Ghazālī writes that this slave is: "a wicked deceptive deceiving liar who poses as a [trustworthy] advisor but underneath his advice is colossal

---

[438]Ibid., 880-81.

[439]Ibid., 881.

[440]Ibid.

evil and deadly poison"; and those responsible for fending off his criminal behavior, i.e. the police, symbolize anger.[441]

As the king (i.e. the soul) daily seeks the Wise Minister's counsel, "one hour" does not go by when the evil slave does not refrain from countering the Wise Minister's sound advice. At times, the Wise Minister alerts the king to the slave's malicious counter-intelligence. When this happens, the king dispatches the police to apprehend him; yet the evil slave only flees because they are *incapable* of imprisoning him (or his helpers).[442]

At the end of the allegory, Ghazālī states its point: in order for man to live properly before Allah, his soul must seek help from the intellect so that it is able to bridle his lust and anger. Otherwise, if man's soul fails in doing this, the Commanding Soul's detestable powers gradually overpower him, destroying his life.[443] Ghazālī then quotes three qur'anic passages warranting the allegory and his summary: 1) Sūrat al-Jāthīyah: 23; 2) Sūrat al-A'rāf: 176, and 3) Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 40-41. The first two verses denigrate man's هوى, or evil desire, describing those who follow it as dogs or idolators. In the third verse (covered in the previous section), Allah exhorts man to forbid his soul from الهوى, or evil desire. If he obeys, *jannah* becomes his abode. If he rebels, Hell awaits him.

Despite Ghazālī placing the king's five soldiers within the "party of Allah," his allegory emphasizes the unrelenting battle raging between him and the soldier named

---

[441]Ibid.

[442]Ibid.

[443]Ibid.

lust. Ghazālī's symbolism verifies the tangible conflict occurring between the good and evil within man's soul. More specifically, Ghazālī equates the soldier named lust to the Commanding Soul's evil desire, or الهوى.

The *waswasah*. The heart, Ghazālī says, resembles a "mirror" in its beginning stages, "ready to be polished (مستعدّة لأن ينجلي فيها) . . . [by] the reality of truth in all matters (حقيقة الحقّ) . . ."[444] However, one of the foremost reasons man's heart fails to reflect its brilliance, remaining dull and rough, results from sin. Ghazālī writes:

> The cloudiness of sins and wickedness (لكدورة المعاصي والخبث) which accumulates upon the face of the heart from the abundance of lusts (كثرة الشهوات), indeed that forbids the heart's cleansing and its majesty [whereby] manifestation of the truth is prevented (يمتنع ظهور الحقّ). . .[445]

Important to note is that earlier Ghazālī holds Satan liable for the Commanding Soul's evil. However, Ghazālī officially places the soldier lust under the "party of Allah", even though his allegory spotlights its continuous rebellion and "colossal evil." It seems that Ghazālī desires to espouse the soul's goodness while at the same time navigate away from diminishing man's unyielding struggle with evil. Moreover, Ghazālī endorses man's ability to "polish" his heart, yet intimates that the soul's "abundance of lusts" impedes the process. What, then, hinders man from truth, Satan or man's soul? Ghazālī officially replies: "Satan's *waswasah*;" but who or what does his answer actually indict?

The heart, Ghazālī writes, resembles a building containing many closed entrances. These doorways open either by external or internal stimuli. Outside events open the pathways leading to man's heart through the five senses (الحواس الخمس). The

---

[444]Ibid., 888.

[445]Ibid.

inner (الباطن) doorways elicit from the "imagination (خيال), lust (شهوة), anger (غضب), and built-in dispositions from the temperament of man (والاخلاق المركّبة من مزاج الانسان)".[446] Whether proceeding from external or internal events, Ghazālī states that each piece of data, after entering the heart, leaves a mark (أثر). Every mark produces a "thought" (خاطر). The thought leads to "desire" (رغبة), and desire produces "determination" (عزم) whereby "intent" (نية) follows, which finally results in man's "members moving into action" (تحرُّك الاعضاء).[447]

Of particular interest to Ghazālī in this chronological sequence beginning with external or internal input to the heart is the moment when "thought leads to desire." At this point, Ghazālī states, evil (الشرّ) and good (الخير) materialize.[448] Evil "harms" (يضرّ), resulting in a consequence (عاقبة), and Ghazālī defines it as وسواس (previously associated with the Commanding Soul and Satan's "dark suggestions"). Good, on the other hand, "benefits" (ينفع) man, helping him successfully reach the afterlife (الدار الأخرة). Ghazālī defines "good" as إلهام, or inspiration.[449]

In Ghazālī's view, evil and good, which he calls وسواس and إلهام, originate in man from two different sources—Satan (الشيطان) and the Angel (الملاك). Regarding Satan and the Angel, Ghazālī states:

> The Angel is an expression about the nature (خلق) that Allah creates [in man] concerning the overflow of goodness (إفاضة الخير), the communication of knowledge (إفادة العلم), the unveiling of truth (كشف الحقّ), the promising of good, and commanding what is acceptable . . . Satan is an expression

---

[446]Ibid., 903.

[447]Ibid.

[448]Ibid.

[449]Ibid.

> about the nature (خلق) concerning what is against that [the Angel's nature], the promising of evil, and commanding vile deeds (الوعد بالفحشاء) . . .[450]

Ghazālī reiterates that Allah creates two "natures." *Representing* them are Satan and the Angel. He then cites Sūrat al-Baqarah: 268 which says:

> The Satan threatens you with poverty and bids you to conduct unseemly. Allah promiseth you His forgiveness and bounties and Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things.

Satan and the Angel not only draw man towards evil and good, but according to Ghazālī they reside *inside* man's heart. Man's heart "gravitates "between" Satan's "dark suggestions" (وساس) and the Angel's divine inspiration (إلهام). Meaning, both Satan and the Angel "roam" (يجولان) freely in man's heart.[451] Surprisingly, Ghazālī then connects *fiṭrah* to the good *and* evil present in man's heart. He writes:

> The heart by the origin of *fiṭrah* is good (القلب بأصل الفطرة) by accepting the marks (أثر) of the Angel; but for accepting the marks of Satan [the heart is] equally good (صلاحا متساويا), there is not one of them that carries more weight (ليس يترجح) over the other, [just] one of the sides prefers to follow the evil desire (الهوى) and the devotion (اكباب) to lusts . . .[452]

Man's *fiṭrah* is good, but according to Ghazālī its divine nature constructs an internal synergy permitting both good *and* evil. Recalling the external and internal stimuli that etch "marks" on the heart, Ghazālī in the above quote specifically apportions the internal evil entering man's heart to الهوى, citing Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 40-41 ("restrained his soul from الهوى/lust; previously studied). Therefore, Ghazālī equates Satan's وسوسة to the soul's وسوسة (Sūrat Qāf: 16). If this is true, then the soul's nature is evil either due to Satan taking up *residence* in man's heart through lust (الهوى), or because the heart naturally

---

[450]Ibid., 904.

[451]Ibid.

[452]Ibid.

inclines towards evil due to its lusts which Satan merely preys upon. It appears that Ghazālī's language *supports both.*

According to Ghazālī, when man follows the anger and lust in his heart, Satan's dominion (تسلُّط) begins to reign in man's heart through the soul's evil desire. It seems, then, that the soul's lust *preempts* Satan's residence, thus, showing consistency with Ghazālī's chronological sequence discussed earlier. However, Ghazālī also writes that الهوى is Satan's "pasture" (مرعى) and "his breeding ground" (مرتعه), suggesting he actually abides in الهوى.[453] Thus, in this specific case, Ghazālī blames Satan for the soul's evil nature. As he instructs Muslims how to repel Satan's perpetual وسوسة, though, he likewise admits that evil inclinations start in the soul without any prompting from the external five senses *or* Satan. Ghazālī writes:

> There is no escape (لا يُنجى) [for man] from the abundance of the dark suggestions (كثرة الوسواس) except [by] closing the doors [of the heart] to the thoughts. Its [the thoughts' external] doors are the five senses, and its doors from inside are the lusts and affections of the world. Seclusion in a dark house shuts the door to the senses. The deprivation from family and money lessens the entrances of the dark suggestions from the inner [stimuli]. But there remains . . . [by] the inner entrances (مداخل باطنة) imaginations happening in the heart (التخيُّلات الجارية في القلب), and that cannot be pushed away except by activating the heart through remembering Allah . . .[454]

Ghazālī relegates man's evil to Satan by synthesizing *his waswasah* to man's soul. In other words, Ghazālī teaches that Satan enters man's heart and then whispers evil into man's soul through his lust. However, Ghazālī further claims that if a person isolates himself from the outside world, voluntarily depriving his senses from all external stimuli; then though this step may "lessen" Satan's وسوسة, it will never stop the soul's evil "imaginations happening in the heart".

---

[453]Ibid.

[454]Ibid., 908.

Ghazālī analysis. Allah chooses the heart as man's instrument to know him. Ghazālī teaches that the heart comprises the spirit, soul, and intellect. Allah intentionally creates the heart to know good by the intellect and evil through the soul. Therefore, the heart equips their representatives, Satan and the Angel, for continual battle. Satan roams freely in the heart exploiting man's lusts for his evil purposes. Autonomously, though, and void of external sensory or Satan's input, the Commanding Soul whispers evil to man. Man's nature then, according to Ghazālī, is evil on two accounts: 1) Satan's وسوسة exploiting the soul's lust, and 2) the Commanding Soul's inner and evil stimulus.

Rāzī (d. 1209)

Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī was a "great exegete and religious philosopher" in Islam.[455] Mājid Fakhrī writes: "The only equal of al-Ghazālī in philosophical and theological erudition in the twelfth century is Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī . . ." One specific area occupying Rāzī's scholarly interests throughout his studies pertains to the soul.[456] In the book *Kitāb al-Nafs wa al-Rūḥ wa Sharḥ Quwāhā* (*The Book of the Soul and Spirit and Explanation of their Powers*), Rāzī addresses three topics concerning the soul's dual nature and particularly its propensity for evil. The following subsections discuss these matters: 1) classifying man; 2) the rational soul; and 3) desire destroys.

---

[455]Ignaz Goldziher and Bernard Lewis, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, Modern Classics in near Eastern Studies (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 65.

[456]Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 331-32.

Classifying man. According to Rāzī, a methodical approach investigating the soul's essence begins by differentiating man's genus from creation's genera. Allah molds man deliberately unique, but unless one contrasts humanity to Allah's other creatures, man fails to appreciate the differences between the angels, animals, plants, and himself.

Rāzī categorizes Allah's creation into four classes (مراتب): angels (ملائكة), animals (حيوانات), plants (نباتات), and humans (أناس). Each class' internal qualities indirectly demarcate mankind's exclusive incorporeal composition. Angels, Rāzī begins, "have an intellect (عقل) and wisdom (حكمة), but do not have a nature (طبيعة) or lust (شهوى)." The first two characteristics ensure the angels' inability to sin against Allah and disobey his commands.[457] In inverse format, Allah gives *animals* a nature and lust, but no intellect or wisdom. With the latter two internal qualities missing, animals, then, function from raw instinct. Inanimate objects (جمادات) and plants lack all of them; but Rāzī stresses that Allah endows humans with *all four*.[458] In fact, Rāzī states that the constant interface between wisdom, intellect, nature, and lust is precisely what makes man human.

Rāzī instructs that Allah compels himself to form a creature such as man because man's genus makes "all the possibilities" (كل ممكنات) between his four attributes likely. Allah does not withhold from humanity these characteristics, Rāzī writes, so that

---

[457]Al-Razi, *Kitab Al-Nafs Wa Al-Ruh*, 3.

[458]Ibid., 3-4.

he can appoint man ruler over the earth.[459] In Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30 the Lord notifies the angels, "Lo! I am about to place a viceroy (خليفة) in the earth . . ." Their response forebodes man's immoral activity:

> Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not.

Concerning their reply, Rāzī writes:

> When lust, anger, and intellect are combined [together], he [man] becomes ignited in dread (مشتعلا في هيبة), carrying out lust (قضاء الشهوة) and executing anger (امضاء الغضب)—and that necessitates . . . corruption from the lust (وقوع الفساد من الشهوة), and from his [Allah's] statement "will shed blood" from . . . the anger . . .[460]

Lust "corrupts" man and "anger" leads to killing his fellow man. Clearly, Rāzī views these two traits in man, negatively. The angels' poor view of man, Allah explains in Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30, is due to their *ignorance*. Allah "knows" what he is doing by choosing man, and he has deliberately excluded the angels from this information. Allah creates angels solely with intellect and wisdom, Rāzī writes, thus they "know" only how to praise Allah. As a result, the angels are unable to fathom why Allah's will includes intentionally creating a creature with all four internal qualities, particularly lust.

Indeed, lust debases man, Rāzī says, along with his anger. Man's intellect, though, awards man with the ability to accomplish far more good than evil. In addition, despite the angels' ceaseless veneration of Allah, Rāzī asserts that they lack a nature *desiring* truth. Worshiping Allah is all the angels know. It is what they do. This is not the case for man, though, whose nature is a cross between lust *and* intellect, evil *and*

---

[459]Ibid., 4.

[460]Ibid.

good. Hence, because man can *yearn* for the truth (الشوق إلى الحق), Rāzī states that Allah considers him the most honorable (شريف) choice to rule creation.[461]

By way of analogy to prove the above point, Rāzī describes three groups of people with different tastes in food. The first group, Rāzī states, determines to eat only the choicest food. As they do this, though, their palates eventually grow dull due to them becoming accustomed to their daily delicacies. The next group, though, knows nothing about delicious food, even denying themselves good drink and clothes. The third group, Rāzī writes, lives primarily on bad tasting food, but on occasion eats the finest cuisine. This third group, Rāzī writes, when they return to eating bad food again, will definitely know the difference, and as a result, *crave* savory dishes.[462]

These three groups Rāzī says represent the way in which Allah creates the angels, animals, and humans. Angels dwell in Allah's light, always taking pleasures in his majesty. The second group describes the animals, habitually experiencing lowly lifestyles with no hope for change; and the third group depicts humans. Rāzī writes:

> But as for man, sometimes he becomes immersed (غرقًا) in sicknesses of the body (علل الاجسام), and sometimes he is delivered from them (يتخلّص منها) to the lights of the holy world . . . and he moves sometimes from strain (الشدّة) to ease (الرخاء) . . . from depression (اليأس) to hope (الرجاء), . . . from darkness (الظلمة) to light (النور) . . .[463]

Investigating the soul's essence, in Rāzī's methodology, begins by appreciating man's unique genus as compared to Allah's three other classes of creation: angels, animals, and plants. Allah creates man a superior being by not only giving him lust and a

---

[461]Ibid., 5.

[462]Ibid., 8-9.

[463]Ibid., 9.

nature, but also an intellect and wisdom. These internal attribute combinations, Rāzī states, enable humans to *yearn* for Allah's truth, making man the most honorable genus. So whereas lust corrupts man by "immersing" him into "darkness", at other times his intellect overcomes the lower desires, ushering him into Allah's light.

The rational soul. Before Rāzī describes the Rational Soul (which is similar to Ghazālī's all-encompassing heart concept), in order to avoid confusion over its four terms (اربعة الفاظ)—the soul, the intellect, the spirit, the heart—he defines three of them.[464] Rāzī writes that the human *spirit* forms the "special" (مخصوص) and "tangible" (محسوس) presence within humans, while man's *intellect* attains knowledge. The *soul*, however, refers to man's "reprehensible innate dispositions" (الاخلاق الذميمة).[465] These inner-entities, Rāzī states, comprise the "essence of the soul" (جوهر النفس) which he later names the Rational Soul (النفس الناطقة). Thus, according to Rāzī, both honorable and dishonorable natures dwell in man's Rational Soul.

Rāzī's endeavor illustrating the Rational Soul somewhat mirrors Ghazālī's approach. Rāzī offers three allegorical stories aiming to illustrate the unseen activity occurring within the Rational Soul. The first allegory characterizes the Rational Soul as a king, the story's protagonist. Man's physical body (البدن) symbolizes the king's kingdom which Rāzī occupies with internal and external soldiers: "The external and internal senses (الحواس الظاهرة والباطنة) are the soldiers (الجنود) . . ." and the king's enemies are lust and

---

[464]Ibid., 78.

[465]Ibid.

anger.[466] Rāzī explains that if the king takes the initiative to wage war against his enemies, then the kingdom will stand, despite the resulting intensification in conflict (وارتفعت الخصومة). The consequence (العاقبة) for not fighting against lust and anger, though, results in the kingdom's "deterioration" (اختلّت مملكته), ending in the king's destruction (الهلاك)."[467]

Rāzī portrays the Rational Soul in another allegory as a hunter (فارس) on horseback going out with his hunting dog. The horse he is riding represents lust, and the dog, anger. When the hunter employs his hunting skills adroitly he is able to control his horse and guide his dog. If there is "stupidity (اخرق) in his soul", the horse is "defiant" (جموحًا), and the dog "voracious" (عقورًا); and in the end "the horse does not remain under him [the hunter] according to his will, and his dog does not go where he sends . . ."[468]

In a third allegory by Rāzī, the Rational Soul describes a king who relinquishes control of his kingdom to three rulers. These rulers in Rāzī's story appear to implement their roles independently. This is not true, however, because Rāzī stresses that they originate from the same source, yet are like "three children from the same father" (يتولّد منه اولاد), or "three rivers from the same spring" (المنبع الذي يتشعّب منه ثلاثة انهار).[469]

The first ruler sharing dominion over the king's kingdom is lust (الشهوة). Rāzī describes lust's domain as man's "liver" (كبد), and from there "it flows in the blood

---

[466]Ibid., 81.

[467]Ibid.

[468]Ibid., 82.

[469]Ibid., 83-84.

through the indwelling veins" (جريانها مع الدمّ في العروق الساكنة).[470] Rāzī further states due to a particular *ḥadīth* that Satan conducts his business through man's lust. This means that Satan forms an on-going conglomerate with man's lust, laboring to rule him from the inside. The "power of anger" (قوّة الغضب) serves as the second leader vying for control in man. It initially embarks from the heart and then like lust spreads out to the whole body through the veins. Man's third ruler resides in the brain, transmitting to all parts of the body. Rāzī calls it the "directing mental power" (القوّة النفسانية المدبّرة).[471]

Another topic motivating Rāzī's research concerning the Rational Soul relates to whether or not every man's soul shares the same essence. In the tenth chapter of *Kitāb al-Nafs wa al-Rūḥ wa Sharḥ Quwāhā*, Rāzī quotes Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 grappling with *fiṭrah's* relationship to the soul's essence.[472] In Rāzī's understanding, Allah's *fiṭrah* in man impinges upon the Rational Soul's nature. Meaning, a man due to *fiṭrah's* essence "might be born with a natural disposition for evil and depravity" (قد يكون مجبولًا على الشرّ والنذالة). Even if a person expends great effort trying to change his vile tendencies[473] through good deeds and self-restraint, Rāzī writes that "it is not possible [for him] to add anything [to himself], [and] by no means will he change from his harmful nature (لم يتغيّر أصلًا عن طبيعة لايذاء)".[474] The opposite also holds true, Rāzī says. Man's "good" *fiṭrah* can affect the soul's essence making him "generous" (جواد), even if he is monetarily poor.

---

[470]Ibid.

[471]Ibid., 84.

[472]Ibid., 86.

[473]Rāzī also attributes a person's "greed" or "stinginess" (بخل) to فطرة.

[474]Al-Razi, *Kitab Al-Nafs Wa Al-Ruh*, 86.

Rāzī defines man's soul as "reprehensible," and includes it is one of the elements comprising, as well as influencing, the Rational Soul's essence. In his allegories Rāzī categorizes lust as man's number one enemy; he also teaches that Satan occupies man's lust from within his blood. Moreover, Rāzī admits man's *fiṭrah* can either be good or evil, impacting the Rational Soul's essence.

Desire destroys. The Qur'an teaches that "desire" (الهوى) and "lust" (الشهوة) flow from the Commanding Soul. In a chapter highlighting the disparaging aspects about sensual pleasures men indulge in, Rāzī reveals ample information implicating the Commanding Soul's evil. Rāzī writes, "There is no doubt (لا شك) that man has an intellect that guides him (له عقل يهديه) and desire that destroys him (وهوى يرديه)".[475] Rāzī's statement could appear to infer that a steady equilibrium between Allah's guidance and man's destructive desire exists in man's day-to-day living; but this would be an incorrect supposition. Instead, Rāzī states that man's intellect, the location where Allah's guidance occurs, shares the *smaller* percentage. In fact, Rāzī teaches that a large disparity presents itself when comparing Allah's guidance to man's evil desire because the soul's هوى has many helpers, while the intellect has none.

Those "helping" هوى's cause are: "lust (الشهوة), anger (الغضب), covetousness (الحرص), and the inner and external senses (الحواس الظاهرة والباطنة)."[476] Due to the advantage evil desire has over the intellect, Rāzī states: "the intellect is weaker than

---

[475]Ibid., 104.

[476]Ibid., 104-05.

الهوى".[477] The intellect's vulnerability especially reveals itself in children until they mature more fully when the "light of the intellect" grows stronger. Prior to or after mental maturity though, Rāzī states that man's inclination towards obeying his evil desire (and its "helpers") receives far more prominence than following Allah's guidance through the intellect.[478] A quote from Rāzī summarizes this point:

> According to what we [previously] mentioned, the majority of actions issuing forth from man is from the requirements of his desire (الهوى) and from the category of reprehensible acts (الافعال الذميمة), indeed after man boldly commits them (اقدام عليها) and then has a break from them . . . the intellect remains empty from fighting desire (يبقى العقل فارغا عن منازعات الهوى), so at this time man goes out [again] and does what is detestable . . . and nothing remains except sorrow (الحسرة), regret (الندامة), and shame (الخجالة).[479]

Due to the soul's destructive nature, Rāzī dedicates the entire second half of *Kitāb al-Nafs wa al-Rūḥ wa Sharḥ Quwāhā* to enumerating its illnesses. For eighty-one pages Rāzī lists and expounds upon man's "reprehensible acts" caused by the Commanding Soul. They are:[480] "the love of money" (حُبّ المال), "covetousness and stinginess" (الحرص والبُخل), "the love of fame" (حبّ الجاه), "the love of praise" (حبّ المدح), "hypocrisy" (الرياء), "intentionally revealing acts of obedience" (قصد اظهار الطاعات), and "concealing sins" (كتمان الذنوب).

The intellect tries to guide man to Allah's truth, while his evil desire seeks to destroy him. The evil soul and its "helpers," in fact, according to Rāzī, are far stronger

---

[477]Ibid., 105.

[478]Ibid.

[479]Ibid.

[480]Ibid., 110-91.

than man's mental faculty. Most men, consequently, succumb to living in obedience to the Commanding Soul's "reprehensible acts."

Rāzī analysis. Rāzī plainly states that the soul's essence includes both good and evil. Allah purposefully creates man with both attribute combinations—wisdom and intellect, lust and nature—so that he can yearn for truth; and even though lust debases man, the potential good man can accomplish through the intellect trumps the soul's evil. Within Rāzī's Rational Soul paradigm, the soul's lust overtly wages war against man's intellect. In fact, it seems that Rāzī gives greater attention to the soul's evil rather than its good. There can be no doubt, however, about Rāzī's appreciation for the horrible destruction that results from the soul's evil desire. Although Rāzī at one instance attributes the soul's evil desire to Satan's presence in man's blood, it seems illogical to hold the devil accountable for every instance the context specifically mentions the soul's evil desire. In other words, Satan cannot take credit for all of the soul's evil desires. Rāzī never infers this, nor does the Qur'an.

Ibn Qayyim (d. 1350)

Ibn Taymiyyah's tutelage generated many disciples. Some consider Ibn Qayyim the most accomplished. The fact that he serves as Ibn Taymiyyah's editor and authors many books of his own ratifies this. An example attesting to his excellent scholarship is the work titled *Al-Rūh* (*The Spirit*). Macdonald states that *Al-Rūh* "undoubtedly" represents "the fundamental position of orthodox Islam" in matters

relating to the spirit[481] and the soul.[482] This next subsection concentrates on selections from *Al-Rūh* where Ibn Qayyim specifically writes about the soul's dual capacity and evil nature.

Good and evil. Muslims during Ibn Qayyim's era and today sometimes misunderstood his instruction about the soul when he defines the Tranquil Soul, Blaming Soul, and Commanding Soul. Not surprisingly, occasionally the idea arises from the Muslim community that man possesses three distinct souls. For example, some might presume that the Tranquil Soul dwells in man until the Blaming or Commanding soul prevails over it and assumes control, or vice-versa. The Qur'an, however, does not support this concept. The soul is "one", Ibn Qayyim writes, "but it has [different] attributes (صفات)." Thus, depending on which characteristic surfaces in man determines how one classifies it.[483]

The man that the Tranquil Soul inhabits "depends on" (توكّل على) Allah. Faith permeates the person whose life the Tranquil Soul abides. This is because the Tranquil Soul "softens" (يلين) man's "heart" and "ligaments" (مفاصل), inspiring him to "serve" the Lord (خدمته) and "draw closer to him" (تقرّب إليه). Worry (قلق), discomfort (إنزعاج), and turmoil (إضطراب), depart the man with the Tranquil Soul. Moreover, when these traits exude from man, he can only thank Allah, because the Tranquil Soul is a gift that only

---

[481]Ibn Qayyim believes man's soul and spirit refer to the same entity, but just differ in attributes (*Al-Rūh*, 218).

[482]Duncan Black Macdonald, "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam: Part I," *The Moslem World* v22, no. 1 (1932): 33.

[483]Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Ruh*, 220.

God can grant.[484] In order to maintain this blessed operational mode, Ibn Qayyim advises that man "remember Allah" (ذكر الله), otherwise the Blaming Soul or Commanding Soul takes residence. Specifically, "remembering Allah" requires recalling his names (اسمائه), his attributes (صفاته), his "oneness" (توحيد), and "properties of his perfection" (نعوت كماله). Applying these steps, Ibn Qayyim states, strengthens the Tranquil Soul's presence that in turn produces greater joy in a man's life, increasing his hope for *jannah*. In summary, the man acquiring the Tranquil Soul goes from:

> Doubt to certainty, ignorance to knowledge, forgetfulness to remembering, treachery to repentance, lamentation to salvation, falsehood to sincerity, inability to intelligence . . .[485]

With regards to the Blaming Soul, Ibn Qayyim acknowledges various views exist. One sect (طائفة) proposes that the Blaming Soul's essence comprises a spirit of "wavering" (التردُّد).[486] This sect believes that if a man experiencing the Tranquil Soul lives steadfast in the Lord, faithfully obeying Allah, then the man with the Blaming Soul suffers from erratic unpredictability. Meaning, the Blaming Soul causes man's behavior to fluctuate between love and hate, joy and sadness, obedience and disobedience, etc. Another sect emphasizes *to whom* the Blaming Soul belongs, asserting the believer alone cares enough to question Allah about whether his actions are pleasing. Ibn Qayyim further mentions a different group alleging that the Blaming Soul actually causes a

---

[484]Ibid.

[485]Ibid., 223.

[486]Ibid., 225.

believer to sin, but then afterwards denounces him for the blessings which pass him by as a result.[487]

Ibn Qayyim states that even though these above descriptions are not incorrect, he however chooses to divide the Blaming Soul into two types: "Blamed" (ملومة), and "Blaming" (لوّامة; as written in Sūrat al-Qiyāmah: 2):

> 'Blamed' is the oppressive ignorant soul which Allah and the angels blame. But 'Blaming' is different than 'Blamed", it is which still blames man for its deficiency in obedience to Allah in his submission and effort . . . the most noble of souls blames itself in the [lack] of obedience to Allah (اشرف النفوس من لامت نفسه في طاعة الله) . . .[488]

The non-Muslim and Muslim, in Ibn Qayyim's view, experience the Blaming Soul's rebuke. The non-Muslim encounters its painful admonition for his faithless lifestyle by Allah directly, but the Muslim's Blaming Soul prompts him to reprove himself so that Allah will have no need to on Judgment Day.[489]

Even though Allah "tests" (امتحن) humans through the Blaming Soul and the Commanding Soul,[490] Ibn Qayyim labels only the latter as man's enemy. The Commanding Soul serves as the Tranquil Soul's polar-opposite. They share nothing in common. The Tranquil Soul's nature is good; the Commanding Soul's nature is evil. Ibn Qayyim writes:

> As for the Commanding Soul, it is reprehensible (المذمومة). Indeed, it is which commands every evil and this [is] from its nature (طبيعتها) [and] except [by] the success, establishment, and help that Allah gives it, no one would get rid of the soul's evil (فما تخلّص احد من شرّ نفسه) . . .[491]

---

[487]Ibid.

[488]Ibid., 226.

[489]Ibid.

[490]Ibid.

[491]Ibid.

This quote provides Ibn Qayyim's commentary for Sūrat Yūsuf: 53 which says, "Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human soul) certainly prone to evil, unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." Wanting to clarify his statement about the soul's evil nature, Ibn Qayyim explains that "evil is latent in the soul" (الشرّ كامن في النفس).[492] Man's vile deeds, then, from Ibn Qayyim's understanding, spawn from the Commanding Soul's evil nature.

One of Ibn Taymiyyah's literary works which Ibn Qayyim perhaps edits is titled *Tazkīyat al-Nafs* (*Purifying the Soul*). In this popular piece (where in it Ibn Taymiyyah cites from Ibn Qayyim's *Al-Rūh*), Ibn Taymiyyah displays great disdain for the evils concealed inside man's soul. Ibn Qayyim's view about the soul's evil nature, then, should not cause consternation, for he simply builds upon his mentor's theology. A particular quote by Ibn Taymiyyah adds insight to his endeared student's training in the Commanding Soul's nature. Ibn Taymiyyah writes:

> The sicknesses (الافات) and dirty offenses (المبقات المدنسة) by the human soul (النفس البشرية) are profuse (كثيرا جدا), of the most important [are]: unbelief (الكفر) and polytheism (الشرك), hypocrisy (النفاق) and doubt (الشك), not fearing Allah (الخوف من غير الله), following evil desire (اتباع الهوى), pride (الكبر) and miserliness (شُحّ), cowardice (الجبن) and envy (حسد) and anxiety (الجزع), arrogance (الغرور) and love of authority (حُبّ الرياسة), the sea of wishing (بحر التمنّي), exaltedness upon the earth (العلو في الأرض), rage of the soul (الحمية للنفس) and its anger (الغضب لها), excess (الاسراف) and scandal (الغيبة) and gossip (النميمة) and bribery (الرشوة) and vileness (ذُلّ), inability (العجز) and procrastination (التسويف), deficiency (التقصير) and extravagance (الغلو), hurriedness (العجلة) and complaint (الشكوى), greed (الطمع) and impatience (الهلع).[493]

Within the soul live two contrasting natures—good and evil. Ibn Qayyim's comments about the Tranquil Soul, Blaming Soul, and Commanding Soul, explicitly illustrate this truth.

---

[492]Ibid., 226.

[493]Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim Ibn Taymiyah, *Tazkiyat Al-Nafs* (تزكية النفس), ed. Muhammad bin

The soul's consort. Both Ghazālī and Rāzī appear to fault Satan for a large percentage of the soul's evil. Their comments incriminate to the point where the soul's evil desire (الهوى) appears to become synonymous to Satan's. Ghazālī teaches that Satan "roams freely" in man's heart, while Rāzī writes that Satan dwells in man's liver, attaching himself to man's lust. Neither one of them ever attribute man's evil entirely to Satan, but at the same time, the language they use at times insinuates this. Ibn Qayyim also allocates Satan a dominant role in the Commanding Soul's evil. Nonetheless, he uses enough consistent terminology to define their autonomous relationship.

After providing a considerable amount of detail in *Al-Rūh* describing the Commanding Soul's evil nature, and without mentioning Satan, Ibn Qayyim proceeds to explain their relationship. In the introductory paragraph describing Satan and the Commanding Soul's affiliation, Ibn Qayyim applies two adjectives and one verb to denote the following information. He writes:

> As for the Commanding Soul, Satan is made (فجعل الشيطان) its consort (قرينها) and its companion (صاحبها) which befriends it (يليها) . . . he [Satan] tempts it (يمنيها) and hurls into it futility (الباطل) and commands it to evil making it [futility] look good (يزيّنه) . . .[494]

Ibn Qayyim's quote shows clearly that Satan and the Commanding Soul are two separate entities sharing equal professions. Satan commands man to do evil, and so does the Commanding Soul.[495] Ibn Qayyim then details this evil alliance. He writes that the Commanding Soul maneuvers against the Tranquil Soul by attempting to gain control of it through sending evil impulses that give an evil "picture" (صورة) for man's intellect to

---

Sa'id Salim Al-Qahtani, 1st ed. (Riyad, Saudi Arabia: Dar al-Muslim, 1994), 15.

[494]Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Ruh*, 227.

[495]Ibid., 227-28.

process. As this occurs, Ibn Qayyim teaches that Satan plunders this evil image, seeking ways to help (يستعين عليها) the Commanding Soul's desire (بهواها) and will (إرادتها) grow to the point where the vile "picture" becomes a reality. Ibn Qayyim writes:

> When [the Commanding Soul] places the picture for them, they [demons] request by their effort what it [the Commanding Soul] loves (تحبه) and desires (تهواه) and then they request by their effort to obtain it so they hunt for this picture (اصطادوا تلك الصورة) and when the soul opens the door of desire for them (فإذا فتحت لهم النفس باب الهوى) they enter from it and sit within its abode . . . and corrupt it . . . and do what an enemy does in his enemy's country . . .[496]

Thus, Ibn Qayyim purports that the Commanding Soul galvanizes the evil "picture" as well as "opens up the door of desire" for Satan's demons (شياطين). Then, only *after* the Commanding Soul's instigation, Satan preys upon the "picture" with supplemental nourishment that the soul "loves" and "desires".

Furthermore, Ibn Qayyim, throughout his work, maintains terminology describing Satan as the Commanding Soul's "consort," or قرين. Underlining the Tranquil and the Commanding Soul's antithetical roles, Ibn Qayyim writes that the "Angel is the consort (قرين) of the Tranquil Soul, and Satan is the consort (قرين) of the Commanding Soul."[497] Most probably Ibn Qayyim chooses to use قرين because the Qur'an uses the same term depicting Satan's relationship with ungodly men. The word قرين appears seven times in the Qur'an,[498] most of them referring to Satan or his demons. For example, in Sūrat Qāf: 27 Allah assigns a demon to continuously record a person's bad deeds, and when the Lord demands the demon give an account for the man's sinful life on Judgment Day, the demon impudently defends his innocence by incriminating the man

---

[496]Ibid., 227.

[497]Ibid.

[498]Sūrat al-Nisā': 38; Sūrat al-Ṣāfāt: 51; Sūrat al-Zukhruf: 36, 38; Sūrat Qāf: 23, 27

he observed. The verse states, "His comrade (قرين) saith: 'Our Lord! I [the demon] did not cause him [the man] to rebel, but he was (himself) far gone in error.'" A human being's evil deeds, therefore, are not the product of Satan's demons, but rather, they originate in man. Yūsuf 'Ali's translation continues to render قرين uniformly in all seven of these occurrences as "comrade," conveying the same meaning as "صاحب" which 'Abd al-Qādir al-Rāzī and Ibn Qayyim further use to describe Satan's relationship to the Commanding Soul.[499]

Ibn Qayyim's vocabulary depicting the Commanding Soul and Satan's relationship, despite their joint roles, refrains from using language assuming they are the same entity. As Ibn Qayyim explains their mutual goals to terminate the Tranquil Soul's good works from reaching Allah, he never fails to reference both of their names in order to acknowledge them individually for the evil man produces. Ibn Qayyim writes:

> The most difficult thing for the Tranquil Soul [to do] is getting delivered by Allah [from] the works of Satan and from the Commanding Soul (من الشيطان ومن الامّارة). If one of the [good works] would have arrived [by man to Allah] like it is supposed to, we [Allah] would have responded to the servant, but the Commanding Soul and Satan refuse (أبت الأمّارة والشيطان) to allow [even] one [good] work to come to Allah. . .[500]

Ibn Qayyim commends the Commanding Soul *and* Satan for the evil occurring in people's lives. Although Ibn Qayyim teaches that the Commanding Soul and Satan's roles are equal, he does not however contend that man's evil is solely Satan's doing. Ibn Qayyim clarifies this by consistently designating Satan as the Commanding Soul's "consort," or one who befriends the Commanding Soul and exploits the mental pictures it

---

[499]Rāzī, *Mukhtar Al-Sihah*, 533.

[500]Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Ruh*, 228.

produces. Ibn Qayyim applies precise terminology in his writing, ensuring that the Commanding Soul and Satan are individually responsible for man's evil.

Ibn Qayyim analysis. According to Ibn Qayyim, man does not have three souls, but one. Thus, the Tranquil, Blaming, and Commanding Soul fight unrelentingly to control man. Ibn Qayyim states plainly that the war raging inside of man is between good and evil—the Tranquil versus the Commanding Soul. Concerning the Commanding Soul, Ibn Qayyim makes two comments confirming its intrinsic evil: 1) he writes that the Commanding Soul's evil originates from "its nature," and 2) he states that "evil is latent in the soul." Furthermore, Ibn Qayyim does not confuse the soul's evil with Satan's. They both tempt man to sin; however, the Commanding Soul does it within man's essence. Satan merely exploits from an external vantage point what the Commanding Soul desires. Due to these reasons, Ibn Qayyim's teaching affirms the Commanding Soul's evil nature.

Ghazālī, Rāzī, and Ibn Qayyim's writings confirm the Qur'an's three operational modes for the soul—the Tranquil, Blaming, and Commanding Soul. All of them write specifically about the incessant battle raging in man between the Tranquil and Commanding Soul. Ghazālī emphasizes that the chronological sequence leading to evil begins with the soul's inner impulses. Rāzī and Ibn Qayyim mention a similar concept whereby the Commanding Soul initiates evil by producing a mental picture. Each Islamic scholar writes in detail about the intimate relationship Satan enjoys with the Commanding Soul. Nonetheless, Ghazālī, Rāzī, and Ibn Qayyim consider the Commanding Soul inherently evil, even though at times their terminology about Satan's role appears to incriminate him alone.

Conclusion

The Qur'an states that Allah intentionally creates in man's soul a capacity for good and evil. The three qur'anic operational modes for the soul concur with this dual-capacity principle. Muslim theologians are unanimous in affirming the Tranquil Soul's good nature and the Commanding Soul's evil nature. Concerning the latter, the Qur'an's grammar, context, and commentary validate that the Commanding Soul: 1) whispers evil to man, 2) contains the source for man's evil desire, 3) leads Joseph's brothers to lie to their father about his death, 4) encourages Sāmirī to worship idols, and 5) drives Cain to murder Able. Ghazālī, Rāzī, and Ibn Qayyim's teachings about the soul validate this qur'anic information. In addition, these Islamic scholars stress the unending struggle man experiences as the Commanding Soul's evil attacks the Tranquil Soul's good. The battle between good and evil rages so strongly that Ghazālī and Rāzī teach that in addition to the Commanding Soul's taunting, its consort, Satan, also roams freely inside of man's heart and flows through his blood. *Fiṭrah* and the Tranquil Soul's inclinations towards Allah, then, form man's good nature. The Commanding Soul's inclinations towards Satan, however, form man's evil nature.

CHAPTER 4

CONTESTING MOHAMED'S POSITIVE VIEW

Evidence from Chapter 2 studying *fiṭrah* indicates that Allah engrains into every man a predisposition naturally acknowledging him as Lord. Examining what the Qur'an and distinguished Muslim theologians inform about the soul, however, discloses a divergent predilection in man's nature. Whereas the Tranquil Soul rests in Allah's goodness, thus complementing *fiṭrah's* intrinsic bent, the Commanding Soul's evil desires prod man into performing vile deeds. The previous chapters' research suggests, therefore, that man's nature in Islam is *dual*, possessing both innate good *and* evil tendencies.

Mohamed[501] in his book *Fitrah: The Islamic Concept of Human Nature* (1996), however, disputes this dual nature concept. Writing on behalf of universal Islam, Mohamed devotes an entire work endeavoring to prove man's nature is *singularly* good. Without discounting Mohamed's scholarship concerning Islam's stance on man's nature, the writer endeavors to contest two critical points from Mohamed's book for the purpose of substantiating man's dual nature in Islam.

Mohamed's twentieth century work defending man's good disposition exemplifies Islam's particular *approach* to defining man's nature through *fiṭrah*. First of all, Mohamed's approach *emphasizes* man's teleological good. Or in other words,

---

[501]Mohamed currently teaches Arabic Studies at the University of the Western Cape.

Mohamed interprets man's nature mostly from a perspective that stresses the good *purpose* which *fiṭrah* guides him towards. Second of all, Mohamed's approach to defining man's nature tends to *de-emphasize* man's ontological evil. Mohamed demonstrates this point as he repeatedly minimizes the Commanding Soul's sinful innate tendencies.

Emphasizing Man's Teleological Good

Ever since the prophet Muḥammad uttered the Core *ḥadīth* and then Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, *fiṭrah's* concept progressively evolves over hundreds of years. By the twentieth century, various Islamic scholars[502] appraise *fiṭrah's* progressions in meaning; and in particular, Mohamed officially categorizes *fiṭrah's* concept into four official views: Predestinarian, Neutral, Positive, and Dual. Mohamed throughout his book builds a case for the Positive View which also entails him spending considerable effort refuting the Dual View. The following section purposes to illustrate Mohamed's teleological emphasis in defining *fiṭrah* as he warrants the Positive View and argues against the Dual View.

Fiṭrah's Four Official Views

Preparing to defend a particular stance about man's nature in Islam first necessitates clarifying the different stages *fiṭrah* passes through in Islamic history. Both Ezzati (2002) in *Islam and Natural Law*[503] and Kafrawi (2009) in *The Oxford*

---

[502]B. Lewis, C. Pellat, and J. Schacht, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Islam New Edition* (London: Brill, 1965), s.v. "Fiṭra," by D. B. Macdonald.

[503]A. Ezzati, *Islam and Natural Law* (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies Press, 2002), 97-100.

Encyclopedia of the Islamic World[504] admit the challenge in clearly demarcating *fiṭrah's* etymological and religious boundaries. Before attempting to do so Ezzati writes, ". . . I would like to point out that the term fitrah cannot be clearly and concisely translated into a single English word. However, there are four classical views of fitrah as follows". Kafrawi agrees with Ezzati that *fiṭrah's* meaning contains "multiple" nuances, but more importantly, both cite Mohamed's work as the source for their four *fiṭrah* classifications.

Predestinarian. Mohamed correctly summarizes *fiṭrah's* initial entrance into Muslim theological discussions. In the early eighth century, approximately one hundred years after Islam's advent, the Jabarites utilized Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 to advance their position on "the doctrine of predestination", or *qadar*.[505] Hence, Mohamed names *fiṭrah's* first view Predestinarian after the majority belief of the early Islamic era which states: "Allah predestines man's works, all of them, good and evil" (pg. 70).[506] One of the Jabarites' most influential leaders was Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān. Jahm's adherents, the Jahmites, and other Jabarites, especially advanced *qadar*'s predeterminism by stressing Sūrat al-Rūm: 30's latter phrase ". . . No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion." Mohamed writes that those holding to this first official view perceive *fiṭrah* as a good *or* evil nature which Allah infuses in man (pg. 72) from birth

---

[504]J. Esposito, ed., The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World (Oxford: University Press, 2009), s.v. "Fiṭrah," by S. Kafrawi.

[505]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 36.

[506]All page numbers within parentheses (e.g. pg. 70 or pgs. 112-13) direct the reader to the related topic previously discussed in the dissertation.

and which never deviates.[507] Moreover, Islamic scholars believe that depending on which nature Allah inserts into man's *fiṭrah* determines whether a person goes to heaven or hell. Also, it is important to note that Ghazālī (d. 1111) and Rāzī (d. 1209) centuries later maintain that *fiṭrah's* essence includes some type of association with man's good or evil nature (pgs. 159, 167). Nonetheless, Mohamed discounts the Predestinarian View's validity on account of it contradicting "explicit Qur'anic statements on free-will and responsibility."[508]

Neutral. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 362 AH), Mohamed writes, represents this second view's leader. 'Abd al-Barr's position denies that *fiṭrah* makes man's nature either good or evil; rather it states that Allah creates man "sound" (سليمة), but "knowing nothing" (Sūrat al-Naḥl: 78)[509] upon exiting the mother's womb (pg. 101). Mohamed claims that 'Abd al-Barr's Neutral View results from his distaste for the polemical debates occurring regularly between the Jabarites and Mu'tazilites over *qadar*, i.e. whether or not Allah creates and controls man's actions.[510] The Core *ḥadīth's* (pgs. 60-61) analogy comparing a newborn infant to a "perfect young animal" (بهيمة جمعاء), consequently, forms the Neutral View's premise. When a child is born, he enjoys "a wholesome, 'blank state' condition, a state of completeness, but devoid of any good or

---

[507]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 37-38.

[508]Ibid., 61.

[509]Ibn Taymiyah, *Dara' Ta'arud*, 8:443.

[510]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 38-39.

evil essence."[511] Mohamed's Neutral View, then, considers all children—Muslim and non-Muslim—unbelievers, making faith a goal man earns as he matures. Summarizing the Neutral View, Mohamed writes:

> The compelling conclusion of this scholar ['Abd al-Barr] is that man is born in a state of ignorance and innocence, acquires knowledge of right and wrong from the external environment only and makes conscious choices about which stimuli he will accept and which he will reject in order to attain the pleasure of Allah.[512]

Despite Mohamed approving the Neutral View's stance that *external factors alone* cause man to commit evil, he discredits it on two accounts: 1) it is the result of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's "reaction" to the Jabarites' qadar campaign, and 2) it is "inconceivable" that Allah creates a "soul" without any "trace or mark of the Divine".[513]

Positive. *Fiṭrah's* "intrinsic goodness" distinguishes the Positive View from the previous two.[514] 'Abd al-Barr's Neutral View kindles Ibn Taymiyyah's (d. 1328) resolve to champion the Islamic notion that *fiṭrah* means more than simply *tawḥīd*, but also generates in man the motivation to love and obey Allah (pg. 104).[515] Mohamed writes that *fiṭrah's* Positive View, as a result, enforces a "pro-active drive which purposefully seeks to realise Islamic beliefs and practices."[516] The Core *ḥadīth* convinces Ibn Taymiyyah that *fiṭrah* leads man to Islam; but after it does, *tawḥīd*'s aggressive pull

---

[511]Ibid., 39.

[512]Ibid., 40.

[513]Ibid., 62.

[514]Ibid., 41.

[515]Ibn Taymiyah, *Dara' Ta'arud*, 8:448-50.

[516]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 41-42.

continues to impel man deeper into ardent obedience to Allah. Mohamed stresses that if the Core *ḥadīth* teaches that parents have the ability to make their child Jewish, Christian, or Magian, and that a healthy infant corresponds to a "perfect animal," then logically this means that the lack of external influences opposing the child's *fiṭrah* inevitably ensures he becomes a Muslim. The Positive View, according to Mohamed, represents Islam's reigning theological stance on *fiṭrah*, and he lists classical Islamic scholars such as Qurṭubī, Iṣfahānī,[517] and Ibn Qayyim who also recognize this view.

Dual. This view arises, Mohamed writes, from the allegedly corrupt religious and politically charged environments that the Egyptian Sayyid Quṭb (d. 1966) and Iranian 'Alī Sharī'atī (d. 1977) grow up in.[518] In comparison to classical Islamic scholars, Sayyid Quṭb does not attend a traditional qur'anic school (or كُتّاب), and when he eventually becomes one of the Muslim Brotherhood's (الاخوان المسلمين) "intellectual leaders",[519] he preaches a message declaring the "white man's" nation-state and polytheistic demise.[520] Furthermore, Sayyid Quṭb's religious worldview polarizes Islamic rule (نظام اسلامي) against Ignorant Rule (نظام جاهلي), driving him to also counter Egypt's socialism.[521] Despite Sayyid Quṭb basing his religious campaign for Islamic reform upon the Qur'an's

---

[517]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 2:575.

[518]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 55.

[519]Frank Griffel, *Shari'a: Islamic Law in the Contemporary Context*, ed. Abbas Amanat and Frank Griffel (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 47-48.

[520]Sayyid Qutb, *Al-Mustaqbal Li-Hadha Al-Din* (المستقبل لهذا الدين) (Kuwait: I. I. F. S. O., 1970), 59-74.

[521]Ḥamīd 'Ināyat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, 1st ed., Modern Middle East Series (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982), 151-52.

message, Mohamed asserts that the qur'anic passages he selects establishing his stance on man's nature are heavily influenced by his personal dogmas. One of Sayyid Quṭb's key verses supporting the Dual View comes from Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29 which states:

• وإذْ قال ربُّك للْملٰئكة إنّى خٰلقٌ بشرًا مّن صلْصلٍ مّنْ حمإٍ مّسْنُونٍ (٢٨) فإذا سوّيْتُهُ ونفخْتُ فيه من رُّوحى فقعُوا لهُ سٰجدين (٢٩)
• Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man, from sounding clay from mud moulded into shape; (28) "When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him." (29)

Allah's creative plan in Sayyid Quṭb's mind firmly implants two divergent sides into man: lowliness and exaltedness. The "mud" connotes man's internal faculty which seduces him into living a life succumbing to the world's Ignorant Rule (نظام جاهلي). Thankfully, Allah melds another ingredient into man by "honoring" him with a portion of his "spirit".[522] Sayyid Quṭb, consequently, perceives evil and good subsisting in man's nature. He writes:

> Conflict begins when man deviates from the truth which is hidden in the depths of his own nature [*fiṭrah*] (يحيد عن الحقّ الكليم في اعماقها), under the influence of his own desires (هواه), and when he follows laws based on his own opinions (الهوى) instead of following God's commandments. Instead of submitting to his True Master along with the rest of the universe, he rebels and revolts.[523]

'Alī Sharī'atī also justifies that man's nature is dual based upon Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29. He calls man a "bi-dimensional being" consisting of "two contradictory elements": "putrid clay" and "some of his [Allah's] own spirit".[524] 'Alī Sharī'atī states:

> Every man is endowed with these two dimensions, and it is his will that enables him to decide either to descend toward the pole of sedimentary mud that exists in his being, or to ascend toward the pole of exaltation, of God and the spirit of God. This constant striving and struggle takes place in man's inner being, until finally he chooses one of the poles as the determinant for his destiny.[525]

---

[522]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 56-57.

[523]Qutb, *Milestones*, 91.

[524]Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam: Lectures*, 73-74.

[525]Ibid., 74.

Although ʿAlī Sharīʿatī's father is a leading Iranian Islamic scholar, ʿAlī Sharīʿatī instead serves mainly in an official capacity as a religiously motivated political activist.[526] Consequently, because Mohamed believes that Sayyid Quṭb and ʿAlī Sharīʿatī compromise their Islamic objectivity due to their "social-political" philosophies, he refutes the Dual View and its notion that ontological evil abides in man.[527]

Analysis. Categorizing *fiṭrah* into four official views helps Mohamed clarify its complex meaning and prepares him to defend the Positive View. Furthermore, despite Mohamed describing *fiṭrah's* essence at times in terms of good and evil for each view, its religious emphasis and purpose in man overshadows throughout, taking priority. For example, in the Predestinarian View *fiṭrah* makes man either good or evil. However, the Jabarites deem *fiṭrah's* importance mostly as a tool for measuring whether a person qualifies as a Muslim or unbeliever (كافر) and going to heaven or hell. Likewise, the Neutral View owes its existence to Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr's negative reaction to the Jabarites using *fiṭrah* as leverage for deciding a child's religion and eternal destiny from the moment of birth. The Positive View, furthermore, directly correlates *fiṭrah's* essence with believing in Allah and obeying Islam's tenets. Lastly, Sayyid Quṭb and ʿAlī Sharīʿatī's socio-political backgrounds depict man's nature as good and evil, but do so with the religious motivation for seeing Islamic reform occur within their governments. In short, Mohamed describes man's nature with a teleological emphasis. Meaning, as

---

[526]Ibid., 5-6.

[527]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 64-65.

Mohamed considers man's nature in Islam, he focuses more on its religious *purpose* in man rather than emphasizing its ontological good or evil tendencies.

Refuting the Dual View

The previous section annotating *fiṭrah's* four official views gives the chief reason Mohamed refutes the Predestinarian, Neutral, and Dual Views. Mohamed's response arguing against the Dual View, because it suggests innate good *and* evil abides in man, however, receives the most attention. The following section includes what the writer considers Mohamed's three primary arguments against the Dual View; and which also expose his teleological approach to defining man's nature.

Argument #1. Mohamed claims that Sayyid Quṭb and ʿAlī Sharīʿatī's Dual View emerges as the result of the desire to return their societies into a more purified Islamic state. Mohamed's argument implies that Sayyid Quṭb and ʿAlī Sharīʿatī tend to project their era's existing socio-political battles into their qur'anic exposition.[528] They are not to blame for their religious zeal, Mohamed insinuates, but rather for their lack of objectivity when reading the Qur'an. As a result, their Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29 commentary demonstrates that man's dualistic—good and evil—nature provides an excellent example of eisegesis. Mohamed writes, "Socio-political realities are used by dualist scholars [Sayyid Quṭb and ʿAlī Sharīʿatī] to describe human nature: inner human realities of man's being are a reflection of objective existential realities."[529] In general, Mohamed's

---

[528]Ibid., 64.

[529]Ibid.

point about these two men's exegetical methods proves accurate. For example, Carré evaluating Sayyid Quṭb's massive commentary on the Qur'an writes that "*Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān* (*In the Shadows of the Qur'an*) is not and hardly claims to be a *tafsīr* [qur'anic commentary]." Also, in Chapter Two of *Mysticism and Politics*, Carré admits Sayyid Quṭb allows "personal" matters arising from his relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood to affect his exegetical acumen.[530] Consequently, Mohamed's statements inferring that Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'atī's qur'anic commentary falls suspect to their socio-political views seem credible.

Argument #2. Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'atī teach that "innate good and evil" dwell inside of man.[531] However, Mohamed denies their dualist positon on *two* accounts. First of all, Mohamed claims that because Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'atī hold the Dual View due to their socio-political experiences, then their good-versus-evil worldview must also perceive Satan as Allah's "antithesis".[532] Second of all, because Sayyid Quṭb believes man apprehends his "true nature" by following Islam,[533] Mohamed alleges that this means "Islam exhorts man to be both good and evil".[534]

---

[530]Olivier Carré, *Mysticism and Politics: A Critical Reading of Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an by Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966)*, trans. Carol Artigues, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia,, vol. 85 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003), vii, 21.

[531]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 64.

[532]Ibid., 64-65.

[533]Qutb, *Milestones*, 45-46.

[534]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 65.

Mohamed contends that Sayyid Quṭb's Islamic (نظام اسلامي) and Ignorant Rule (نظام جاهلي) paradigm "suggests that the parallel counter-position of good and evil in the real world represents God, the good, as the thesis; and Iblis, the evil".[535] He states the same for 'Alī Sharī'atī's "*tawḥīd*" (Islamic monotheism) and "shirk"[536] (polytheism) philosophy. Mohamed states that their Dual View, then, "implicitly suggests" that on earth Satan becomes Allah's "rival". Satan acting as Allah's evil counterpart on earth, though, confounds Mohamed's logic because Allah alone is exalted above all things and shares no equal.[537] Nonetheless, Mohamed's rationality against the Dual View for this reason falls short for two reasons. In the first place, as Mohamed "implicitly suggests", neither Sayyid Quṭb or 'Alī Sharī'atī in their literary works *explicitly* write that Allah's antagonist on earth is Satan, nor do they *overtly* state Satan is coequal to Allah. Furthermore, Mohamed's argument stating that the Dual View places Satan in direct opposition to Allah on earth ignores 'Alī Sharī'atī's teaching in one of his lectures titled "Man and Islam". In this lecture 'Alī Sharī'atī writes:

> In contrast with other religions that posit God and the Devil to exist within nature in mutual combat, Islam teaches that only one force exists in nature—the force of God. But within man, Satan wages war against God, and man is their battlefield.[538]

Therefore, 'Alī Sharī'atī does indeed support the Dual View, however, he rejects any notion that Satan wars directly against Allah as a "rival".

---

[535]Ibid.

[536]Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam: Lectures*, 28-33.

[537]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 65.

[538]Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam: Lectures*, 78.

In Mohamed's second argument opposing the Dual View, he *assumes* that Sayyid Quṭb teaches that man must commit good and evil in order to faithfully follow Islam. In similar fashion to 'Alī Sharī'atī, though, Mohamed overlooks Sayyid Quṭb's teachings. Sayyid Quṭb's commentary on *fiṭrah's* crucial verse—Sūrat al-Rūm: 30—demonstrates this point on numerous accounts. For example, in its initial phrase, "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth" (أقِم وجهك للدين حنيفًا), Sayyid Quṭb highlights Islam's uprightness (استقامة) and infallibility (عصمة) from "miscellaneous [evil] desires" (الاهواء المتفرّقة).[539] Sūrat al-Rūm: 30's second phrase "[Adhere to] the fitrah of Allah upon which He has created [all] people" (فطرت الله التي فطر الناس عليها), Sayyid Quṭb writes, "makes the connection between the human soul's *fiṭrah* and the nature of this religion [Islam]" (يربط بين فطرة النفس البشرية وطبيعة هذا الدين).[540] Sūrat al-Rūm: 30's first phrase, according to Sayyid Quṭb's commentary, stresses *fiṭrah's* holiness; and therefore, if Islam's nature shares a "connection" with *fiṭrah*, then Sayyid Quṭb deems Islam holy. This is because Sayyid Quṭb views *fiṭrah* and Islam as "constant" (ثابتة)[541] and leads him to exegete the third phrase—"No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know"—in a way that not only disproves Mohamed's present argument, but also discloses the difference between Sayyid Quṭb and Mohamed's approach to defining man's nature.

---

[539]Qutb, *Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an*, 21:2767.

[540]Ibid.

[541]Ibid.

In earlier commentary, Sayyid Quṭb states that Islam and "the human soul's *fiṭrah*" share the same nature. Then, expositing the third phrase referring to the impossibility of "change" occurring with the "creation of Allah", Sayyid Quṭb writes that if human souls actually stray from *fiṭrah*, then Islam's truth offers the sole means by which man returns.[542] As a result, Sayyid Quṭb blames man's "miscellaneous [evil] desires" for the reason why "most people do not know" *fiṭrah's* upright essence or live accordingly. In addition, Sayyid Quṭb writes that people "follow their [evil] desires without knowledge, going astray from the upright continuous path [Islam]".[543]

Therefore, Sayyid Quṭb's Sūrat al-Rūm: 30's commentary about *fiṭrah* refutes Mohamed's assumption that his Dual View encourages man to commit good and evil in order to properly manifest Islam's nature. This is true because Sayyid Quṭb regards Islam and *fiṭrah's* nature as purely *good*. Sayyid Quṭb's commentary on *fiṭrah* further reveals that his approach to defining man's nature takes into account man's evil desires (الاهواء), which the Qur'an teaches belong to the Commanding Soul.

Argument #3. Mohamed criticizing Sayyid Quṭb's exegesis of Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10 and Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29 forms a third argument against the Dual View. Sayyid Quṭb's definitions for Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10's (pgs. 117-20) two initial verbs—سوّى and ألهم—provide the platform for Mohamed's Dual View criticism. Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10 says:

---

[542]Ibid.

[543]Ibid.

> By the Soul, and the proportion (سوّى) and order given to it; (7) And its enlightenment (ألهم) as to its wrong and its right;— (8) Truly he succeeds that purifies it, (9) And he fails that corrupts it! (10)

Sayyid Quṭb states plainly that these four verses verify the "soul's duality" (ازدواج طبيعة الانسان).[544] The "soul's duality" in Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10 means to Sayyid Quṭb that through *fiṭrah* Allah primes within man's soul the *readiness* for doing good and evil (مزوّد باستعداد متساوية للخير والشرّ). Meaning, according to Sayyid Quṭb, "external factors" (العوامل الخارجية) are not responsible for inciting people's good and evil deeds but instead merely serve to rouse the good and evil tendencies already latent in man.[545] Furthermore, through *fiṭrah* Sayyid Quṭb writes that the "soul's duality" empowers man to "distinguish between good and evil" (هو قادر على التمييز بين ما هو خير وما هو شرّ) and then act upon one of them.[546]

Mohamed disagrees with Sayyid Quṭb's Dual View mainly for improperly defining the two verbs سوّى and ألهم in Sūrat al-Shams: 7. Whereas Sayyid Quṭb claims that both verbs allude to the soul's "latent" (كامنة) "wrong and right" existing in man's "essence" (صميمه),[547] Mohamed argues that he "ignored the significance of the word '*sawwá*' . . . and rendered an inaccurate translation of '*alhama*' . . ."[548] The verb سوّى refers to something in "balanced proportion", Mohamed states; hence, it does not refer to the soul's "latent" preparedness for good and evil. *Lisān Al-'Arab* affirms Mohamed's

---

[544]Ibid., 30:3917.

[545]Ibid.

[546]Ibid.

[547]Ibid.

[548]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 65.

grievance against Sayyid Quṭb's سوّى rendering, making "balanced proportion" (pg. 118) more precise.

The second verb ألهم, though, Mohamed defines as "endowing him [man] with knowledge". Counter to Mohamed's ألهم definition, though, Sayyid Quṭb teaches that it actually inserts an innate good-evil disposition into man's soul. Again, Mohamed's criticism proves accurate, but this time Sayyid Quṭb's ألهم argument at least draws out the point that the soul comprises a dual capacity. Jurjānī affirms that ألهم's definition relates to the *knowledge* that Allah gives which "man cannot obtain through the senses" (pg. 118). *Lisān Al-'Arab* and *Mufradāt Fi Gharīb Al-Qur'ān* further include definitions for ألهم which infer a dual "readiness" present in man's soul. For example, one ألهم definition from *Lisān Al-'Arab* portrays the idea of Allah "casting" a good or evil deed into man's soul through divine inspiration (pg. 118). *Mufradāt Fi Gharīb Al-Qur'ān* also renders ألهم in such a manner implying that Allah places good and evil "powers" into the soul with the expectation that they will be carried out (pg. 118). As a result, Mohamed's ألهم definition for Sūrat al-Shams: 7 stands correct because ألهم does not relate to giving man's soul an innate disposition. Notwithstanding Mohamed's critique, though, the points Sayyid Quṭb makes about ألهم in Sūrat al-Shams: 7 effectively draw attention to the fact that Allah equips man's soul with the *capacity* for doing good and evil.

Another chief passage by which Mohamed criticizes Sayyid Quṭb's Dual View comes from Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29 (pg.186). In Sayyid Quṭb's exposition for this passage he explains that the "mud" and "spirit" comprise the two essential ingredients Allah chooses to form man's nature. "Man's origin" (أصل الانسان) commences from "the

earth" (الأرض), or from below, which the "mud" symbolizes.[549] Man's earthy composition (تركيب الانسان الجسدي) provides life to the body, setting its members into motion with all of its bodily needs. Allah, however, creates man unique from the animals by breathing into him a portion of his spirit. Allah's spirit in man, Sayyid Quṭb writes, is *the* pivotal ingredient which distinguishes humans from animals. His spirit transforms man from a lowly, merely physical being, to a spiritual one that Allah honors so that man's heart and mind may connect with him.[550] It is true that Sayyid Quṭb admits that his ideas about man's two essential ingredients are extra-qur'anic;[551] and perhaps this is the reason why Mohamed does not critique this mud-spirit symbolism. However, the issue that does form Mohamed's main point of contention relates to Sayyid Quṭb's commentary concerning man's composition.[552]

Interestingly, Sayyid Quṭb, despite his dual approach to man's nature, considers man's physical-spiritual, or good-evil, composition wholly subsisting alongside man's *fiṭrah*. About this point, Sayyid Quṭb writes:

> Every time we converse about man's composition from mud and exalted breath [of spirit] which made him into a unique creation . . . Indeed there is no separation between these two horizons in his formation (إنه لا انفصال بين هذين الأفقين في تكوينه), and neither of them [mud or spirit] act independently of the other (ولا تصرُّف لأحدهما بدون الآخر) . . .[553]

One paragraph later Sayyid Quṭb illustrates *fiṭrah's* joint relationship with the soul and its evil tendencies. He writes:

---

[549]Qutb, *Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an*, 14:2138.

[550]Ibid., 14:2138-39.

[551]Ibid., 14:2138.

[552]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 67.

[553]Qutb, *Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an*, 14:2139.

> The person who tries to damage his vital bodily abilities (يعطّل طاقته الجسدية الحيوية) is like the one who tries to impede his freed spiritual abilities (يعطّل طاقته الروحية الطليقة) . . . both of them proceed out equally against his *fiṭrah* (كلاهما يخرج على سواء فطرته), because he wants from his soul what the Creator does not want for him. Both of them destroy his soul by the destruction of that composition in its [the soul's] pure essence (كيانها الأصيلة). And he [as a result] is accountable before Allah for this destruction.[554]

These two quotes by Sayyid Quṭb corroborate with his prior commentary and teach that man's *fiṭrah* is holy but also subsists within man's soul. Man's soul, then, according to Sayyid Quṭb, has the ability to desire what counters Allah's good will for his life. These two points by Sayyid Quṭb which relate to his Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29 commentary, though, diametrically oppose Mohamed's teaching about man's nature.

Mohamed cannot agree with Sayyid Quṭb's Dual View because Mohamed divorces the soul from *fiṭrah's* essence. More precisely, Mohamed divides the soul into two halves: the "lower" and the "higher". The lower self, referring to the نفس, Mohamed names the "carnal" or the "psychic self". The "higher self" he names the "mind" (i.e. the intellect).[555] *Fiṭrah*, according to Mohamed, however, "is vested in man's spirit" which unlike the "lower" and "higher soul", does not "perish" but returns to Allah.[556] Thus, the incorporeal entities Mohamed determines to remain or perish within man influences the way he defines man's nature. For this reason, because the earthy "mud" ingredient (or "carnal soul") in Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29 symbolizes a lowly nature, i.e. "susceptible to misguidance", Mohamed deems it "transient", or passing away at death. Man's spirit,

---

[554]Ibid.

[555]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 67-68.

[556]Ibid.

because it originates with Allah, is noble in nature; and thus, remains after death. Mohamed writes:

> Matter or the 'clay' part of man is transient and its purpose is solely to provide man with the psyche or the carnal self and terrestrial garb by means of which he can fulfill his role as khalīfah.[557]

Even though Allah purposefully creates man from the two ingredients clay and spirit, because the clay does not relate directly to man's vicegerent role on earth, then as a result, Mohamed *does not* take into consideration the soul's earthy influence on man when he defines man's nature. In contrast, Sayyid Quṭb's approach to defining man's nature *recognizes* man's honorable vicegerent role through Allah's *fiṭrah* and spirit, and at the same time does not discard the influence of the soul's good and evil desires.

This dissertation's second chapter's findings about *fiṭrah* support Mohamed's third argument, or method by which he defines man's nature from Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29. Similar to Mohamed, these sources agree that Allah creates man with *fiṭrah* that is good; and "good" specifically means that it intrinsically leads each person to faith in Allah. The third chapter's information focusing on the soul also agrees with Mohamed's third argument. The Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, and its primary authors, like Mohamed, acknowledge the Commanding Soul's evil, but nonetheless, give priority to man's honorable role due to *fiṭrah's* divine presence and purpose.

Mohamed's distinction between the carnal soul (نفس) and spirit (روح); however, does not find support among Muslim scholars. Iṣfahānī,[558] Ibn Manẓūr,[559] 'Abd al-Qādir

---

[557]Ibid., 67.

[558]Al-Iṣfahānī, *Al-Mufradat* 2:764.

[559]Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisan Al-'arab*, 6:4500.

al-Rāzī,[560] and Fayyūmī[561] state that the soul and spirit are the same entity. Ibn Qayyim writes that the "difference between the soul and the spirit is [in] their attributes; there is no difference in being" (فالفرق بين النفس والروح بالصفات لا فرق بالذات).[562] It is true that Ghazālī (pg. 152) and Rāzī[563] (pg. 165) briefly mention the spirit separately from the soul, but the former they describe simply as the life-giving member to the body and its five senses. However, Mohamed writes that *fiṭrah* is "vested" in the spirit. If Mohamed means by "vested" that the spirit dwells inside of *fiṭrah*, then the writer finds no basis for Mohamed's claim. Furthermore, Ghazālī, Rāzī, and Ibn Qayyim, although they list the soul and spirit as separate (for differing in attributes), they support Sayyid Quṭb's idea that they both work in close proximity with *fiṭrah*, rather than separately.

Analysis. Mohamed's first argument accusing Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'atī for substantiating the Dual View with socio-political eisegesis has validity. Consequently, whenever reading their commentary, comparing their تفسير with trusted Islamic sources is paramount. However, Mohamed's second argument against Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'atī is unfounded: they do not assert man must commit good and evil in order to manifest Islam's nature. In addition, Sayyid Quṭb's theology, in part two of the second argument's rebuttal, unveils two important truths: 1) *fiṭrah* and Islam share the same holy nature, and 2) man deviates from his *fiṭrah* whenever he follows the

---

[560]Rāzī, *Mukhtar Al-Sihah*, 672.

[561]Fayyūmī, *Al-Misbah Al-Munir*, 756.

[562]Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Ruh*, 218.

[563]Al-Razi, *Kitab Al-Nafs Wa Al-Ruh*, 78.

Commanding Soul's evil desires. In Mohamed's last argument dealing with Sayyid Quṭb's commentary on Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10, when compared to classical commentators, although failing to prove the soul's dual nature, it does confirm the soul's dual capacity. Also, while Mohamed's third argument against Sayyid Quṭb's Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29 commentary proves valid, the differences between their two approaches to defining man's nature surfaces. Sayyid Quṭb's approach claims man's *fiṭrah* subsists within the soul's duality without ever separating the spirit's noble effects on man. Mohamed's approach, though, counters Sayyid Quṭb's, separating man's *fiṭrah* entirely from the soul, declaring that *fiṭrah* "vests" itself in the spirit alone. Hence, Mohamed's approach to defining man's nature embraces the noble ingredients—*fiṭrah* and spirit—which complement man's vicegerent role. With regards to man's earthy ingredient, the "carnal soul," Mohamed discards it. Quṭb's method of defining man's nature, in contrast to Mohamed's, however, includes both the noble and the earthy components of man's nature. Meaning, Sayyid Quṭb's Dual View recognizes *fiṭrah* and the spirit's activity in man's vicegerent role, but at the same time it does not ignore the soul's good and evil desires.

Supporting the Positive View

From the four official views categorizing *fiṭrah's* meaning—Predestinarian, Neutral, Positive, and Dual—Mohamed supports the Positive View. Mohamed believes *fiṭrah* imbues man with an innate disposition, directing him "towards right action and submission to Allah, the One God."[564] The Positive View avers *fiṭrah's* good nature

---

[564]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 13.

predicates faith in Islam, subsequently and naturally leading man to affirm its truths. The first Muslim scholar Mohamed lists personifying the Positive View is Ibn Taymiyyah (pgs. 93-107). Mohamed correctly represents Ibn Taymiyyah's teaching by expressing *fiṭrah's* "natural correspondence between human nature and Islam"; and this phrase specifically refers to the process whereby man intrinsically *knows* Allah, *loves* him, and *wants* to "practise the religion".[565] Therefore, man's "nature" in Mohamed's Islamic mindset is first and foremost "spiritual",[566] or in other words, one that emphasizes a person's foreordained purpose.

This section aims, therefore, at highlighting the fact that Mohamed's teleological approach to defining man's nature merely imitates the classical scholars' approach as seen in this dissertation's second chapter defining *fiṭrah*. Mohamed's teleological approach uses four primary Islamic scriptures to explain *why* man's nature is good in Islam. They are: 1) the Core *ḥadīth*; 2) Sūrat al-Rūm: 30; 3) Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172, and 4) Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72. Mohamed's "classical positive interpretation"[567] which mirrors most early Muslim scholars, though, also continues into the twenty-first century. As a result, the writer concludes this section by listing some "neo-classical" scholars nearly replicating Mohamed's teleological bent.

Core *ḥadīth*. (pgs. 54-60) By the first few pages of his book, Mohamed provides *fiṭrah's* "religious meaning" beginning with the Core *ḥadīth*. In it the prophet

---

[565]Ibid., 41.

[566]Ibid., 87.

[567]Ibid., 51.

Muḥammad says: "No child is born except on Al-Fitra (Islam) and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian or Magian . . ." Statements Mohamed makes about the Core *ḥadīth* provide a threefold contribution to defining man's nature: 1) *fiṭrah* becomes synonymous with Islam,[568] 2) every child is born Muslim,[569] and 3) evil external influences alter the child's faith.[570] These points affirm, then, that *fiṭrah's* nature esteems man's religious teleological purpose in life: to follow the faith in which he was born, Islam.

Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. (pgs. 40-52) At the end of the Core *ḥadīth*, Islam's leader prophecies Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. *Fiṭrah's* sole qur'anic usage occurs in this verse. Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 reveals that Allah creates all people upon *fiṭrah*; but before *and* after this qur'anic truth he informs Meccan unbelievers: 1) to "direct your face toward the religion (للدين)", 2) that there is "no change in the creation of Allah," and 3) that *fiṭrah* relates to "the correct religion (الدين القيّم)". These three points from Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 together imply *fiṭrah's* religious connotation. In fact, Mohamed agrees with Abu Hurayrah that the way in which Muḥammad connects the Core *ḥadīth* to Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 only strengthens *fiṭrah's* association with Islam.[571] Despite Sūrat al-'Imrān: 19 equating "religion" (دين) to Islam, Mohamed states that *fiṭrah's* exact meaning in this verse (agreeing with Ibn Taymiyyah) refers to *tawḥīd*. Mohamed writes:

---

[568]Ibid., 43.

[569]Ibid., 17.

[570]Ibid., 42.

[571]Ibid., 16.

> The ayah [Sūrat al-Rūm: 30] describes a *fiṭrah* of primordial faith which Allah Himself implanted in human nature. It implies Islam's essential message of submission to the will of Allah as taught and practised by all the prophets.[572]

Through *fiṭrah* each person receives a "primordial faith" that believes in Allah and his unity, or *tawḥīd*. Agreeing with Tustarī, Mohamed states that *fiṭrah's* meaning from Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 represents mankind's unchanging universal "religion," which barring external impediments, naturally leads man to Islam.[573] Man's nature, then, derives from *fiṭrah's* essence, which is *tawḥīd*; and because Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 essentially creates an innate religion inside of every human, Mohamed's Islamic approach to man's nature is teleological.

Sūrat al-A'rāf/7:172. (pgs. 48-50) According to Mohamed, mankind's verbal enactment declaring Allah as Lord comprises *fiṭrah's* essence. Before Allah chooses to create the human race, he makes a covenant with Adam and his entire progeny in Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172. Commenting about this unique covenant, Mohamed writes:

> *Tawḥīd* is intrinsic to man's *fiṭrah* because Allah in His infinite wisdom intended for man to know Him as the One God. This is why man was able to acknowledge his Lord before his existence on earth, that is, in his pre-existence state.[574]

Consequently, *fiṭrah's* nature targets man's re-enactment of the "pre-existential" covenant. Meaning, Allah desires man's "pre-existential submission" to metamorphosis into willful submission to his lordship on earth.[575] Therefore, Mohamed ties confessing Allah's lordship to *fiṭrah*, giving man's nature in Islam a teleological emphasis.

---

[572]Ibid., 17.

[573]Ibid., 50.

[574]Ibid., 23.

[575]Ibid., 46.

Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72. Warranting his position on *fiṭrah's* relationship to man's vicegerent role on earth, Mohamed cites Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72. In this verse Allah declares:

> • إنَّا عرضنا ٱلأمانة على ٱلسموٰت وٱلأرض وٱلجبال فأبين أن يحملنها وأشفقن منها وحملها ٱلإنسنُ إنَّهُۥ كان ظلوما جهولاً (٧٢)
> • We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains: but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it— he was indeed unjust and foolish (72)

Allah in this verse offers the "Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains" a "Trust" (الامانة), which they "refuse". The "Trust" man "undertakes", Qurṭubī writes, mostly refers to "all of the requirements of religion" (جميع وظائف الدين) which Allah gives humans to obey through the prophet Muḥammad.[576] Great reward or punishment accompanies the "Trust"[577] which perhaps intimates the reason creation refuses to carry this burden. Man's vicegerent role on earth, therefore, obligates him to please Allah by praying, fasting, giving to the poor, etc. Humans cannot fulfill this "Trust", Mohamed states, without honoring their *fiṭrah*. He writes:

> At the core of man's being is his primordial nature which he possessed before his 'fall' to earth and which he still carries deep within himself. In this original state of *fiṭrah*, man is potentially the perfect khalīfah [vicegerent].[578]

Mohamed connects man's "primordial nature" (i.e. *tawḥīd*) directly to *fiṭrah*. Assuming man maintains his *fiṭrah* by faithfully following Allah's religious requirements, he successfully achieves his vicegerent role.

Mohamed connects Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72 and *fiṭrah* to man's vicegerent role upon the earth. There are two other verses Mohamed does not include, though, that are worth mentioning which explicitly name man the earth's vicegerent. In the first verse,

---

[576]Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 14:162.

[577]Al-Ṭabarī, *Jami' Al-Bayan*, 22:53.

[578]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 86.

Allah informs the angels in advance that he chooses man to be his "vicegerent" on earth (Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30); and in the second one, Allah advises King David how to be a successful vicegerent. In this second verse Allah says: ". . . We have set thee as a viceroy (خليفة) in the earth; therefore judge aright between mankind, and follow not desire (الهوى) that it beguile thee from the way of Allah . . ." (Sūrat Ṣād: 26). Concerning this verse, Rāzī states that the vicegerent who rules the earth according to Allah's law (الشريعة) reaps benefits for the whole world (مصالح العالم). On the contrary, the vicegerent choosing to follow the Commanding Soul's evil desire (متابعات الهوى), though, strays from Allah's path and is worthy of receiving painful judgment (يوجب سوء العذاب).[579] Therefore, Mohamed believes that Allah places *fiṭrah* in every man for an extremely important purpose: to rule the earth as vicegerent. Obeying Allah's commands keeps man on the right path; but as Rāzī states, following the Commanding Soul's evil desires causes him to stray.

As a whole, early Muslim scholars use a teleological approach to define man's nature. With the exception to man's vicegerent role, these classical scholars continuously describe man's nature as *good* using the Core *ḥadīth*, Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, and Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172 as evidence. Thus, Mohamed's consistent use of the Core *ḥadīth* and three other verses merely showcases classical Muslims' views about *fiṭrah*, but in condensed form. Mohamed, though, is not alone. Numerous modern Islamic scholars, like Mohamed, write about *fiṭrah* with the same teleological philosophy. These Muslim theologians exalt humanity's goodness on behalf of the religious purpose that *fiṭrah* gives to man; and yet despite acknowledging the Commanding Soul's ontological evil, their

---

[579]Al-Razi, *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 13:175.

teleological methodology trends into the twenty-first century. The following subsection provides a few examples of this teleological trend by surveying three modern Islamic scholars who share Mohamed's teleological approach to defining man's nature.

Teleological trend. Syed Al-Attas was one of the first Islamic scholars in Malaysia. Attas writes two books relevant to *fiṭrah's* teleological definition: 1) *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul* (1993), and 2) *Islam and Secularism* (1978). Attas formulates specific terminology when referring to man's nature. He writes that there is first a "blameworthy nature" which "inclines him [man] towards injustice (*ẓulm*) and ignorance (*jahl*)."[580] When Attas writes about man's nature in the *context* of his religious *purpose*, however, he uses the adjectives "original," "essential," or "real" to differentiate between the two. According to Attas, "knowing," "serving," and "worshiping" Allah are human realities which man's *fiṭrah* or "original nature" produces; and these divine obligations all "conform with his [man's] essential nature created for him by God."[581]

Like Mohamed, Attas emphasizes that Allah grounds *fiṭrah's* (Sūrat al-Rūm: 30) essence, or "real nature",[582] upon the pre-existential covenant he makes with man in Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172. Allah's "lordship" brands "*each* and *every individual* soul", Attas states,[583] "equipping" man to execute the "burden of trust" (الامانة) as the earth's

---

[580]Muhammad Naguib Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1978), 140.

[581]Al-Attas, *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*, 2.

[582]Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 140.

[583]Ibid., 141.

vicegerent (Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72).[584] Characterizing Attas' teleological approach to defining man's nature, he writes:

> In virtue of the fact that man knows (*'arafa*) God in His Absolute Oneness as his true Lord, such knowledge . . . has bound man in a Covenant (*mīthāqī, 'ahd*) determining his purpose and attitude and action with respect to himself and God (q. v. 7:172 fol.). This 'binding' and 'determining' of man to a Covenant with God and to a precise nature in regard to his purpose and attitude and action is the binding and determining in religion (*dīn*) and in real submission (*aslama*) respectively. Thus both *dīn* and *aslama* [confessing Islam] are mutual correlates in the nature of man (ref. *fiṭrah*).[585]

Attas confidently backs the Positive View. He affirms man's goodness due to *fiṭrah*; and then similar to Mohamed, Attas provides a teleological description regarding what man's good nature entails. Man's "real nature," though, according to Attas, concurrently coexists with his ontological "dual nature", consisting of two souls: the "rational soul" (النفس الناطقة) and the "animal soul" (النفس الحيوانية).[586] Attas writes that the "rational soul" represents the Qur'an's Tranquil Soul, while the "animal soul" the Commanding.[587] Allah expects the former to serve as the body's "king" and subdue the latter.[588] Attas does not, however, view the two souls separately as Mohamed does. Instead, they are united, continuously battling against each other for supremacy. Thus, the Tranquil Soul inclines towards faith in Allah, yet the Commanding Soul pursues the "lower" things of the world, leading man astray.[589]

---

[584]Al-Attas, *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*, 4.

[585]Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 139.

[586]Ibid., 69-77.

[587]Al-Attas, *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*, 5-6.

[588]Al-Attas, *Islam and Secularism*, 69-70.

[589]Al-Attas, *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*, 16-17.

Fazlur Rahman is another twentieth century Islamic scholar who defines man's nature in similar fashion to Mohamed. One of Rahman's foremost works, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, displays his determination to soundly exposit significant theological motifs prevailing in Islam's primary scripture. Several chapters by Rahman accentuate man's teleological nature due to *fiṭrah* and also, the Commanding Soul's evil bent.

While enumerating numerous qur'anic verses describing man's personhood in Islam, Rahman records similar ones to Mohamed. Rahman lists Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-29 which mentions Allah creating humans from two ingredients, mud and spirit, declaring that it is God's spirit "distinguishing" man "from the rest of natural creation".[590] In opposition to Ghazālī or Sayyid Quṭb's ideas, though, Rahman claims the Qur'an shuns any sense of body or spirit *duality*. The Qur'an designates man as a "person" or "soul" which Rahman says operates in different "states, aspects, dispositions, or tendencies of the human personality" (i.e. the Tranquil, Blaming, and Commanding Soul).[591] Rahman also states that Allah gives man knowledge about himself through *fiṭrah* which prepares him for success as the earth's vicegerent.

Rahman explains *fiṭrah's* essence from Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 as man's "primordial nature"; and as long as he chooses to "keep it intact," Satan's "machinations" against Allah's will for his life will fail.[592] Despite man yielding at times to "his [Satan's]

---

[590]Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, 17.

[591]Ibid.

[592]Ibid., 18-19.

desires", Rahman states that this impure behavior does not befit his "real nature"[593] according to *fiṭrah*. Rahman, like Attas, defines man's "real nature" according to the divine purpose Allah implants in man through *fiṭrah*. At the same time, however, Rahman concedes that man's soul has evil desires, also like Attas.

If man fails to "awaken" his "real nature", then man's "destiny" and Allah's "purposes" for him will be thwarted.[594] For man to ascertain this success, Rahman writes that he must win the "moral" battle against evil. Indeed, the Qur'an clearly portrays Satan as man's formidable opponent,[595] but Rahman also acknowledges another evil origin. He writes:

> First, Satan never forces, nor can he force, anyone to do evil but he tries to entice or tempt the possible victim . . . Thus, the real problem lies within man himself, for he is a blend of good and evil . . .[596]

Therefore, Rahman defines man's "real nature" as *good* due to *fiṭrah's* pre-existential faith and divine purpose. Yet, from an ontological standpoint, good and evil "tendencies" exist in man; the evil ones, Rahman writes, Satan simply "exploits".[597]

A third Islamic scholar exhibiting Mohamed's teleological approach to defining man's nature comes from Iran. Six years after Mohamed's work on *fiṭrah*, A. Ezzati pens *Islam and Natural Law*. Ezzati in this work actually compliments Mohamed

---

[593]Ibid., 21.

[594]Ibid., 33.

[595]Sūrat al-Baqarah: 36, 168, 208; Sūrat al-An'ām: 143; Sūrat al-A'rāf: 22, 24; Sūrat Yūsuf: 5; Sūrat al-Isrā': 53; Sūrat al-Kahf: 50; Sūrat al-Fāṭir: 6

[596]Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an*, 127.

[597]Ibid., 126.

for his well-researched book concerning man's nature established by *fiṭrah*.[598] Islam in Ezzati's view, first of all, is دين الفطرة, *the* "original religion", making humanity into one "universal brotherhood . . . under God".[599] More specifically, Ezzati provides two examples showing a teleological approach to defining man's nature. In the first example, Ezzati annotates Islam's four "laws of human nature;" and for the second he lists *fiṭrah's* four "functions."

According to Ezzati, Islam contains four "laws of human nature," or in other words, laws founded upon *fiṭrah*. They are:[600] 1) Allah creates man as a vicegerent to know him as "creator", 2) Allah creates man to worship him alone, i.e. *tawḥīd*, 3) Allah creates men "theologically" equal, i.e. not stratifying mankind into religious classes, and 4) Allah creates man without sin and able to "earn his own salvation through his own efforts". Ezzati summarizes these four laws by writing: "The Islamic concept of morality is founded on a sound theological basis with deep roots in human nature."[601] Man's "human nature," then, to Ezzati, wholly emerges from a theological axiom, constantly confronting man with eternal design and purpose.

Fiṭrah, according to Ezzati, also contains four functions. Due to the vast influence *fiṭrah* has upon man's life, Ezzati further fragments man's nature into different dimensions (Note that they nearly mirror the four "laws of human nature," reminding once again that Ezzati's approach to defining man's nature is teleological). *Fiṭrah's* four

---

[598]Ezzati, *Islam and Natural Law*, 98.

[599]Ibid., 62.

[600]Ibid., 62-65.

functions are:[602] 1) Ideological: man naturally believes in Allah, 2) Cognitive: man's mental faculties enable him to know Allah, 3) Spiritual: man needs to worship Allah, and 4) Ethical: man is "naturally inclined to be good, do good and avoid evil." Ezzati's approach to defining man's nature from these four "functions" mathematically proves his teleological approach to defining man's nature. Seventy-five percent of the functions emphasize *fiṭrah's* relationship to man's religious purpose, i.e. believing, knowing, and worshipping Allah. Only one function, the Ethical, calculates man's nature ontologically, or by accounting for innate good and evil tendencies. Moreover, one hundred percent of the four laws project a teleological emphasis.

Analysis. Mohamed's teleological approach to defining man's nature is evident. Present throughout his book, Mohamed's Positive View emphasizes *fiṭrah's* meaning using four particular Islamic texts. In specific sections of his book, Mohamed does briefly mention the good tendencies happening inside of man due to *fiṭrah*, but mostly he draws the reader's attention to *fiṭrah's* religious purpose by citing four Islamic texts. The Core *ḥadīth* implies that everyone is born a Muslim because only outside influences alter a person's *fiṭrah* to another religion. From Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, man's *fiṭrah* composes belief in Allah's oneness, or *tawḥīd*, which naturally leads a person to Islam. The pre-existential covenant (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172) forms *tawḥīd*'s earthly goal for man's *fiṭrah*: total submission to Allah's lordship. Fourthly, Mohamed teaches from

---

[601]Ibid., 65.

[602]Ibid., 104.

Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72 that faithfully remaining true to one's *fiṭrah* grants man success in his vicegerent role.

Mohamed's Positive View emphasizing *fiṭrah's* teleological good with these four Islamic texts merely recapitulates this dissertation's second chapter's findings from classical scholars. Brief excerpts defining man's nature from Attas, Rahman, and Ezzati demonstrate that Mohamed's teleological approach continues strong into the twenty-first century. Attas, even though admitting that the Tranquil and the Commanding Soul's good and evil tendencies incessantly battle each other, still considers man's "real nature" as good due to his divine purpose. Rahman also differentiates between man's "real nature" and the soul's ontological good and evil tendencies. Nonetheless, man's "good" vicegerent role to Rahman simply overshadows a person's "moral" battle against evil. Finally, *fiṭrah's* four laws and functions listed by Ezzati reiterate the previous modern authors' views. Ezzati's four laws and functions further provide a rough but tangible number enabling one to calculate the degree to which Muslims emphasize man's nature with a teleological approach. Ezzati's data from *fiṭrah's* laws and functions show that seventy-five percent of the time Muslim scholars—classical to modern era—define man's nature by emphasizing his teleological goodness.

In summary, this first major section highlights the significant point that Islam defines man's nature primarily from a teleological vantage. First, Mohamed defines *fiṭrah's* four official views from a religious posture. The Predestinarian View considers *fiṭrah's* essence as good or evil, which empowers the Jabarites to promote their qadar campaign. According to Mohamed, the Neutral View emerges as a negative reaction to the Jabarites determining a person's religious destiny—*jannah* or the fire—from birth.

Ibn Taymiyyah champions the Positive View which promotes man's goodness and proactive obedience to Allah. The Dual View, while focusing on man's ontological good and evil tendencies, does so with a socio-political motive for Islamic world dominance.

Furthermore, Mohamed chooses to defend the Positive View by refuting the Dual View. He does this by directing two arguments against Sayyid Quṭb or 'Alī Sharī'atī's qur'anic commentary which suggests the soul's ontological good and evil. However, because both good and evil dwelling in man contradict Allah's plan for man and also fail to manifest Islam's true nature, Mohamed cannot accept their ontological premise. Finally, throughout his book Mohamed establishes *fiṭrah's* meaning primarily from four Islamic texts. These scriptures emphasize a teleological approach to defining man's nature. Data from classical Muslim scholars in the first three chapters merits Mohamed's teleological emphasis, and this trend continues into the twenty-first century.

De-Emphasizing Man's Ontological Evil

Mohamed argues in his book that *fiṭrah* makes man's nature solely good; and in the third chapter titled "The Implications of *Fiṭrah*", he explains the soul's relationship to man's nature. More specifically, Mohamed in his third chapter dedicates the greatest attention to de-emphasizing the soul's evil tendencies. During this discussion about the Commanding Soul, however, two areas of weakness materialize in Mohamed's stance against its ontological evil.

Mohamed's first area of weakness arises when he slights the Commanding Soul's innate evil without citing any qur'anic verses or commentators. Moreover, when Mohamed does reference an Islamic scholar, he quotes a famous Ṣūfī whose Commanding Soul *definition* not only indicts Mohamed's, but doubly reinforces the

writer's research from Chapter 3. Mohamed's second area of weakness relates to his teaching that purports man's evil originates solely from external stimuli. Nonetheless, Mohamed's terminology and the sources he cites prove contrary.

References for the Soul Lacking

In Mohamed's endeavor to squelch the notion that the soul contains evil tendencies, he neglects referencing any qur'anic verses or Muslim commentators to buttress his argument. Mohamed's initial soul-discourse starts by constructing a "psycho-spiritual"[603] methodology that begins with him dividing the *nafs* into two entities: soul and spirit. The "lowest form" of the *nafs* Mohamed calls the "carnal soul" (pg. 196), which according to Mohamed is devoid of evil, but easily veers off Allah's path.[604] When man dies, Mohamed states, his "emotional and biological impulses" stop;[605] and thus, the "carnal soul", which Mohamed associates with the Commanding Soul, ceases from existence.

Man's روح, or spirit, though, according to Mohamed, forms "the very essence of human nature."[606] The spirit dwells in man's intellectual faculties,[607] or the mind: the location where man connects with Allah. *Fiṭrah*, Mohamed writes, resides in man's spirit, not in the *nafs*, or "carnal soul." Man's purpose in life, as a result, is to "realise"

---

[603]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 102.

[604]Ibid., 67.

[605]Ibid., 102.

[606]Ibid., 91.

[607]Ibid., 68.

his *fiṭrah* by "reuniting" the "self (نفس)" with the "human soul" (*rūḥ*). When this realization occurs, man achieves the "highest level of spiritual development" which Mohamed states "is referred to in the Qur'an as *an-nafs al-muṭma'innah* 'the self made tranquil'".[608]

Prior to providing more comments that Mohamed makes specifically dealing with the Commanding Soul, the writer's point that he neglects referencing qur'anic verses or commentary on his "psycho-spiritual" philosophy is significant. First of all, when writing about the Tranquil (pgs. 124-27) and Commanding Souls (pgs. 130-33), Mohamed omits citing or listing their verses[609] for his readers to view (e.g. Sūrat al-Fajr: 27 and Sūrat Yūsuf: 53), which is entirely unlike the meticulous way he cites and lists the verses relating to *fiṭrah*. On one occasion, after writing "The spirit (*rūḥ*) is not bound to perish, but will return to its origin which is Allah", Mohamed does cite "Qur'an 96:8". Unfortunately, however, after referencing this verse the writer learns nothing about the روح returning to Allah, but about "man's" return to God and his "rebelliousness" (كلّا إنّ الانسان ليطغى). This is the case because the Qur'an either refers to "man" or the "soul" (نفس) returning to Allah (pg. 114), and not the روح. The Muslim theologian Ibn Qayyim, though, while using the terms روح and نفس interchangeably on this subject, refers only to the soul when referencing the Qur'an (e.g. Sūrat al-'Ankubūt: 57; pgs. 113).[610]

---

[608]Ibid., 91.

[609]Mohamed includes the verse references in a footnote at the end of the chapter.

[610]Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, *Al-Ruh*, 17-40.

Mohamed's dividing the soul into two separate entities (carnal soul (نفس) and spirit (روح)), with the Commanding Soul associating with the "carnal soul," and the Tranquil Soul with the "spirit," further lacks any qur'anic or Muslim commentator reference. On the contrary, the Qur'an and early commentators (pgs. 124-34) recognize the soul as one entity operating in three modes. Also, numerous Muslim scholars (pgs. 171, 197) view the soul (نفس) and spirit (روح) as one created entity.

With regards to Mohamed's specific comments about the Commanding Soul's qualities, while denying its innate evil, oddly he later defines it as "the negative psychic force in man, the seat of his egoistic and selfish drives".[611] Most importantly, Mohamed stresses that the Commanding Soul takes exclusive responsibility for giving the *nafs* a poor reputation. He writes that "Nafs has a negative character in the Qur'an through being called '*an-nafs al-ammarāh bi-s-su'* (the self commanding evil) . . ."[612] Mohamed states correctly that the Commanding Soul gives the *nafs* a "negative character in the Qur'an". Nonetheless, he also seems to imply by this statement that Sūrat Yūsuf: 53 (the Commanding Soul's verse) is the *single* verse in the Qur'an characterizing the soul's "negative character."

This is not the case, however. Not only does the *nafs* "command" man to do evil (Sūrat Yūsuf: 53) in the Qur'an, but in addition, the Commanding Soul also continuously imitates Satan's role by making "evil suggestions" to him (Sūrat Qāf: 16; pgs. 134-38). The Qur'an further sheds "negative" light on the *nafs* by naming it the

---

[611]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 102.

[612]Ibid.

source of man's evil desire (Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 40; pgs. 138-42). The "negative" *nafs* causes Jacob's sons to lie to their father (Sūrat Yūsuf: 17-18; pgs. 142-45), and incites Sāmirī to lead God's people into idol worship (Sūrat Ṭaha: 95-96; pgs. 145-47). The Qur'an's first murder also holds man's *nafs* liable when it "caused" Cain to slay his brother Able (Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30; pgs. 147-49). As Mohamed writes about the *nafs*' "negative character" in the Qur'an, referencing and briefly explaining each of these verses would have been beneficial.

In order to build an objective case against the soul's ontological evil, Mohamed, as he does with *fiṭrah*, should provide ample qur'anic and commentary references. Overall, Mohamed neglects to do this, albeit with one exception. In this unique instance, Mohamed perplexes the writer by referencing Tustarī's (d. 896) Commanding Soul description. More precisely, Mohamed citing Tustarī confuses the writer for two reasons: 1) Tustarī believes in Ṣūfism (التصوُّف) which according to Ghazālī means that he renders the *nafs* wholly "reprehensible" with no redeeming qualities (pg. 153); and 2) Tustarī's "lower self" description harmonizes perfectly with the writer's findings about the Commanding Soul in Chapter 3.

Tustarī's reference. First of all, Mohamed actually quotes Tustarī's "lower self" description from a *secondary* source,[613] rather than directly referencing Tustarī's

---

[613]Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qur'anic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfi Sahl at-Tustari (D. 283 896)*, Studien Zur Sprache, Geschichte Und Kultur Des Islamischen Orients, vol. n F , Bd 9 (Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1979), 258.

personal qur'anic commentary on the *nafs*.[614] Notwithstanding, Bowering's four-part "lower self" definition from Mohamed's book reads:[615]

i. The selfish desire of the *nafs*: it desires its own pleasures through its inborn lust (*shahwāh*) and passion (*hawa'*).
ii. The autonomous claim of the *nafs*: it claims its own self-centred power (*hawl*) and strength (*quwwah*) and follows its own planning (*tadbīr*) without regard for Allāh's guidance.
iii. The antagonistic temper of the *nafs*: it tempts man to act in accordance with his natural inclinations for both restless movement (*harakah*) and listless passivity (*sukūn*), in opposition to Allāh's command (*amr*) and prohibition (*nahy*).
iv. The *nafs* as man's enemy and shaytān's [*Satan's*] companion: it is the worst enemy (*'aduw*) of man and associates itself with *shayṭān* by taking heed of the whispering (*waswasah*).

First of all, Bowering's four-part "lower self" definition complements the writer's Conclusion to Chapter 3 (pg. 179). Secondly, where Mohamed in his book neglects to overtly reference and quote Sūrat Yūsuf: 53, Bowering's four-part Commanding Soul definition does because it immediately follows his exposition.[616] Most significant, though, is that the four-part definition that Bowering devises originally comes from Tustarī's commentary on Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30 and Sūrat Yūsuf: 53.

In one of two verses where Allah explicitly announces man's vicegerent role in the Qur'an, Tustarī teaches about النفس الأمّارة بالسوء, or according to Mohamed's translation, "the self commanding evil." As Allah commissions Adam to rule the earth in Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30, Tustarī describes God "informing" the first vicegerent that the

---

[614]*Tafsīr al-Tustarī: Great Commentaries on the Holy Qur'ān*

[615]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 103.

[616]Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, 256-58.

Commanding Soul will be "his worst enemy".[617] The idea that Allah forges innate evil into man's nature frustrates Mohamed's logic,[618] but Tustarī's commentary (whom Mohamed cites) on Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30 teaches that Allah places ontological evil into man intentionally so that man "remain[s] utterly dependent on Him".[619] The "self" whispers (وسوس) evil suggestions to the heart, Tustarī writes, and unless Adam (and his progeny) seeks Allah's strength for protection against it, he will go astray.[620]

Tustarī also considers Satan the *nafs*' "companion" and explains their delicate relationship. Satan first "whispers" to the "lower self" into man's "breast" (صدر) through "a desire"; thus, giving the *nafs* two options. The Commanding Soul can either "invite" man to "pursue" this evil idea or "turn back to his Lord seeking refuge in Him". In Adam's case, however, Tustarī states that Allah "concealed His remembrance from [Adam] until after he had committed that which was forbidden."[621] It appears that Tustarī holds Satan liable for causing the evil "desire", but rather man's "lower self" for "inviting" it into his heart. Iṣfahānī, an author Mohamed advocates, writes about the companionship that the Commanding Soul and Satan share. According to Iṣfahānī, man has two *inner* enemies striving to hurt him, Satan *and* the Commanding Soul. The Commanding Soul serves as man's greatest enemy and its evil desire (الهوى) alludes to

---

[617]Sahl ibn 'Abd Allāh Tustarī, *Tafsir Al-Tustari*, trans. Annabel Keeler and Ali Keeler, Great Commentaries on the Holy Qur'an,, vol. 4 (Louisville; Jordan: Fons Vitae & Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2011), 16.

[618]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 68.

[619]Tustarī, *Tafsir Al-Tustari*, 16.

[620]Ibid.

[621]Ibid., 17.

Satan himself. [622] As a result, attempting to explain their intimate relationship can be confusing and complex.

Tustarī though, later in his Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30 commentary, reiterates that man's enemy is the soul "that incites to evil." Tustarī affirms his condemning stance on the Commanding Soul when during his commentary on Sūrat Yūsuf: 53 he writes:

> Truly, the [evil-] inciting self (نفس أمّارة) is lust (شهوى), which is the role played by man's [basic] nature (طبع); . . . God, Exalted is He, created the self and made ignorance its nature (طبع) and made desire (هوى) the closest thing to it. He also made desire the door by which man's ruin enters.[623]

Overall, Tustarī's comments disparage the Commanding Soul. The *nafs* to Tustarī is "ignorant"; but the *Commanding Soul* he explicitly writes: "lusts" after evil and its evil "desire" is the "closest thing to" the نفس's "nature (طبع)". Finally, removing any doubt about Tustarī's view on man's nature, he teaches that it contains "four natural dispositions (طبائع)": 1) "animal" (طبع البهائم), 2) "satanic" (طبع الشياطين), 3) "sorcerous" (طبع السحرة), and 4) "devilish" (طبع الابالسة).[624]

Analysis. Mohamed instructs that the human *nafs* contributes significantly to man's psychological and spiritual state. Thus, Mohamed does well to include discussion about the *nafs* as he articulates Islam's "concept of human nature." Unfortunately, the attention to detail Mohamed uses to promote *fiṭrah's* Positive View and counter the Dual View subsides as he broaches the topic of the "self commanding evil." Specifically,

---

[622]Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitab Al-Dhari'ah Ila Makarim Al-Shari'ah* (كتاب الذريعة الى مكارم الشريعة), ed. Abu Zayd Al-'Ajami (Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Salam, 2007), 261.

[623]Tustarī, *Tafsir Al-Tustari*, 96.

[624]Ibid.

while Mohamed develops the soul's "psycho-spiritual" interface, he neglects to provide thorough citations from the Qur'an or Islamic commentary which illustrate the روح's direct relationship to the Tranquil Soul and *fiṭrah*.

The most prominent example demonstrating Mohamed's lack of citation from the Qur'an or Islamic commentary occurs as he begins a section defining the Commanding Soul. Unlike the methodical manner in which Mohamed exposits the Positive View or argues against the Dual View, Mohamed's description of the Commanding Soul comes without quoting Sūrat Yūsuf: 53 or merely citing it for the reader to view. Mohamed further reduces the *nafs* ' evil reputation in the Qur'an when he infers that its "negative character" comes from one single verse: Sūrat Yūsuf: 53. Indeed, Mohamed would best depict the soul's "negative character" by not only listing, quoting, and expositing Sūrat Yūsuf: 53, but also accomplish this for the five other qur'anic verses which incriminate the *nafs* for leading man into committing evil.

Overall, Mohamed lacks proper referencing when writing about the *nafs*, except for one instance when he cites what he alleges is Tustarī's four-part "lower self" description. This four-part Commanding Soul reference, however, does not originate from Tustarī, but from one of Bowering's works examining Tustarī's qur'anic hermeneutic. Moreover, while intending to refute the existence of innate evil in man, Mohamed confounds the writer by citing Tustarī who supports Ṣūfī theology which fully denounces the *nafs* ' goodness. Besides Bowering's "four natural dispositions" proving human nature's inclination to evil, Bowering's four-part Commanding Soul reference furthermore upholds the writer's Chapter 3 findings which state: 1) the Commanding Soul contains evil "desire", 2) the Commanding Soul leads man astray from Allah's path,

3) the Commanding Soul "tempts man" to do evil, and 4) the Commanding Soul and Satan are "companions." Since Mohamed quotes Bowering's four-part definition concerning the Commanding Soul, then he must recognize its ontological evil tendencies within man's essence. The fact that Mohamed does *not* view man's "psycho-spiritual" state in this way, though, should only help the reader gain appreciation for Mohamed's Islamic approach to defining man's nature, which is primarily teleological.

Mohamed making indirect reference to Tustarī's "lower self" definition also counters one of the chief arguments he employs against the Dual View, i.e. "innate evil is completely at variance" with Allah's plan. Yet, Mohamed surprisingly references Tustarī's Commanding Soul commentary which counters his argument. One of the verses that Bowering's four-part definition cites is Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30. In this verse Allah plainly declares man's vicegerent role to which Tustarī's commentary explains that God places the soul's innate evil into man so that as vicegerent he will seek refuge in Allah for help and strength. Therefore, Mohamed's choice in referencing Tustarī for the purpose of supporting man's good nature lacks logic for two reasons. First of all, Tustarī deems man's soul as innately evil which Mohamed refutes. Secondly, Tustarī explains the *reason why* Allah deliberately places the Commanding Soul inside of the earth's vicegerents.

Man's Evil Due to External Sources

Another crucial issue deterring Mohamed from acknowledging man's dual nature concerns his conviction that evil enters man solely from external sources. The Core *ḥadīth* (pg. 54) assures Mohamed that man departs *fiṭrah's* essence only when he faces adverse external conditions. Mohamed writes:

> The central ḥadīth suggests that circumstantial (i.e. parental and other social) influences cause man to change and become alienated from his *fiṭrah*. However, in Qur'an 30:30 ('There is no changing the creation of Allah.') suggests that *fiṭrah* is a universal unchanging given of the human constitution.[625]

Mohamed stresses from Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 that man's *fiṭrah* never changes. Meaning, despite non-Muslim parental upbringing or "other" pagan influences "alienating" man from *fiṭrah's* faith-trajectory, Mohamed asserts that man's good nature remains. However, "if sources of external misguidance are absent" from a child's life or his parent's provide him "Islamic guidance", then "the *fiṭrah* of the individual will be actualized . . . and good will prevail."[626] Logically, then, Mohamed adamantly rejects the proposition claiming innate evil tendencies preside within man.

Wary of restating evidence from the Qur'an supporting the soul's vile tendencies (i.e. the Commanding Soul and its five examples; pgs. 130-49), the writer instead defers to Mohamed's *own* terminology that suggests the "carnal soul's" innate evil. Furthermore, Mohamed supports Ghazālī's self-dynamic philosophy which also suggests innate evil tendencies preside within man.

Mohamed's terminology. Due to what the prophet Muḥammad says in the Core *ḥadīth*, evil tendencies originate from external influences, Mohamed asserts. Throughout Mohamed's book, however, the terminology he uses characterizing man's "psycho-spiritual" interaction and the Commanding Soul suggests otherwise.

---

[625]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 22.

[626]Ibid., 42.

Mohamed believes that external factors in the environment stimulate man to commit evil, but on one occasion he also gives credence to external factors *and* the "lower self." Mohamed writes:

> The central *ḥadīth* makes plain that it is the social circumstances after the birth of the child that causes the individual to diverge from *fiṭrah*. Hence if someone follows an aberrant path it is not because of any innate wrong within his nature, but because of the emergence of the lower self or *nafs* after birth, and negative effects in the social circumstances.[627]

Mohamed depicts man's nature as *good* due to *fiṭrah*, but then acknowledges deviation from it occurs for two reasons: 1) "the emergence of the lower self", and 2) adverse "social circumstances". Mohamed's quote not only emphasizes his teleological approach to defining man's nature (i.e. he directly attributes *fiṭrah* and the "central *ḥadīth*" to man's good nature), but it also display's Mohamed de-emphasizing the Commanding Soul's "negative" influence on man's ability to continue on Allah's path.

In fact, Mohamed's terminology throughout his book increasingly alludes to the Commanding Soul's intrinsic evil. For example, Mohamed writes:

> Although man is born in a state of *fiṭrah*, he also has the potential for wrong. In order to actualize his *fiṭrah*, man needs to gain control over this potential for wrong within himself.[628]

Mohamed's language describing man's nature in this quote is confusing. He first contrasts man's innate *fiṭrah*, which causes him to do good, with the soul's "potential for wrong", which causes him to do evil. In a page earlier, however, Mohamed writes that although *fiṭrah* implants "innate virtue" inside of man, "healthy social circumstances are required in order to awaken this inherent virtue." In addition, Mohamed defines *fiṭrah's* "innate virtue" as "inherent". Applying Mohamed's logic, then, man's goodness,

---

[627]Ibid., 21.

[628]Ibid., 101.

because it must be "awakened," equals "potential" goodness inside of man. Therefore, if man's essence contains the "potential" for "wrong," then why does Mohamed not also take the soul's latent evil into account when defining man's nature? Moreover, for man to "actualize" his *fiṭrah*, or to kinetically manifest its "potential" good, Mohamed writes that man must "gain control over this potential for wrong within himself." If the Commanding Soul requires a human being to exert effort in order to "gain control" over it, *and* so that he may faithfully follow Allah's path through *fiṭrah*, then does not Mohamed's "carnal soul" comprise a palpable evil tendency inside of man that deserves emphasis?

Mohamed's brief explanation about النفس اللوّامة, or the Blaming Soul, continues to illustrate terminology implying the Commanding Soul's innate evil tendencies. Mohamed writes about the Blaming Soul:

> *An-nafs al-lawwamāh* . . . is the first major step in psycho-spiritual growth. It is the inner guide that directs man to the truth, and stands mid-way between the negative tendency of an-nafs al-ammarāh and the positive tendencies of rūḥ and 'aql.[629]

Mohamed easily accepts that the Blaming Soul actively "directs man to the truth". In that Muslim scholars unanimously agree that there are not three souls, but one acting in different modes (pgs. 124, 166), Mohamed, then, inadvertently admits that the soul contains an innate tendency. This point Mohamed affirms by further endowing the Commanding Soul with a "negative tendency" and the Tranquil Soul with a "positive" one. Consequently, Mohamed's Blaming Soul terminology admits the soul's ontological good and evil tendencies.

---

[629]Ibid.

Furthermore, Mohamed teaches that man achieves "psycho-spiritual" success when "the intellect (*'aql*) has complete control over the *nafs*". This soul-state Mohamed designates as "*al-nafs al-muṭma'innah*", or the Tranquil Soul.[630] To enjoy the Tranquil Soul's presence, though, man must discipline the "self", or *nafs*. The following quote by Mohamed highlights the amount of energy man must expend in order to reach the highest level of "psycho-spiritual" development, while also subsequently revealing his terminology exposing the *nafs'* nefarious nature. Mohamed writes:

> The self [*nafs*] must be trained so that it may be integrated with the spirit. The lower level of the *nafs* must be transformed into a positive, spiritually higher state so that the individual may be liberated from bondage to the lower *nafs*, for it tends towards gratification of the biological and emotional needs of the individual and away from the service of Allah.[631]

The *nafs* in Mohamed's view contains attributes hindering the روح's (spirit's) ability to connect with Allah. He writes, the "emotional and the psychological dimensions of man have positive as well as negative tendencies."[632] These innate "negative tendencies" steer man away from Allah's will, incarcerating him spiritually. When a person fails to "train" the "lower self", its "negative tendencies" enslave him, holding him in "bondage." However, Mohamed still insists "innate wrong" circumvents man's nature due to man's higher calling subsisting in *fiṭrah*. Thus, this provides yet another example demonstrating Mohamed acknowledging the *nafs'* "negative" ontological impulses while at the same time bypassing them in his teleological approach to defining man's nature.

---

[630]Ibid., 101.

[631]Ibid., 104.

[632]Ibid.

Ghazālī's self-dynamic. The prominent author Mohamed founds his "psycho-spiritual" methodology upon Ghazālī. Mohamed names Ghazālī's inner-relations recurring within the *nafs*: "the dynamics of the self."[633] To explain this "self-dynamic" template, Mohamed abstains from referencing Ghazālī's work *directly*, and instead cites two *secondary* sources: *The Nature of al-Ghazali's Ethics* by Quasem and *The Ethical Philosophy of Al-Ghazali* by Umaruddin. The original source supporting Mohamed's "psycho-spiritual" philosophy (which the writer cites), however, comes from Ghazālī's colossal work: *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (*Revival of the Religious Sciences*).

According to *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, diverse forces operate inside of man's heart (pgs. 151-54). Ghazālī states that just as Allah places anger (غضب) and lust (شهوى) inside of animals, he does similarly with humans; but Allah blesses man uniquely by further giving him knowledge (علم) and a will (إرادة).[634] Allah also ingrains into man's nature four other attributes (اوصاف). Regarding these four attributes, Ghazālī writes:

> Know that man has been accompanied (قد اصطحب) with four flaws (شوائب) in his nature (خلقة) and composition (تركيبه) . . . the four types of attributes are: predatory (سبعية), bestial (بهيمية), satanic (شيطانية), and godly (ربّاني).[635]

Ghazālī explains that when غضب's force overpowers man, he commits "predatory actions" (أفعال السباع) such as striving with others (العداوة), hating (البغضاء), physically attacking people (التهجُّم بالضرب), and slander (الشتم). If شهوة's force rules over man, then bestial behavior like gluttony (الشره), greed (الحرص), licentiousness (الشبق), and the like, manifest themselves. With regards to the ربّاني force, it actually bears good and bad fruit.

---

[633]Ibid., 109.

[634]Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din*, 882.

[635]Ibid., 885.

For example, a person exalting himself as god (الربوبية) attempts to rule others (الاستيلاء), exalts himself (الاستعلاء), loves authority (التفرُّد بالرياسة), and shrinks away (الانسلاع) from servanthood (العبودية) and humility (التواضُع). However, in contrast, the man seeking knowledge (علم) despises ignorance (الجهل), surrounds himself with Allah's truths, and desists from lording authority over others. The last force Ghazālī lists is the worst force, the *satanic* (الشيطانية), which occurs when both غضب and شهوى control man, producing morals worthy of demons (اخلاق الشياطين), e.g. all kinds of evil (وجوه الشرّ), deception (المكر), trickery (الحيلة), and responding to good with evil (يظهر الشرّ في معرَض الخير).[636]

According to Mohamed's terminology explaining Ghazālī's "self" dynamics, man's intellect and satanic nature comprise "opposing forces of the soul".[637] Whichever one that bridles غضب and شهوة (the satanic force) determines the soul's direction. Meaning, if the intellect subverts the satanic forces, then the "animal forces are harmonized" permitting the soul to pursue and realise *fiṭrah's* innate good. Otherwise, man's satanic nature emerges as dominant causing "man's wrongdoing tendency [to] become stronger . . . at the expense of the good of the soul."[638] Mohamed states that when the satanic force controls man's intellect, "Shaytān [Satan] devises means for the satisfaction of these wrong needs", which in turn produces the Commanding Soul's activity in man.[639]

---

[636]Ibid.

[637]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 110.

[638]Ibid., 110-11.

[639]Ibid., 111.

Ghazālī's philosophy regarding the forces occurring within man's soul explicitly acknowledges evil forces transpiring within man's nature (خلقة). Yet Mohamed, who heralds *fiṭrah's* Positive View, chooses to construct his "psycho-spiritual" relationships chiefly upon Ghazālī's teaching. Mohamed's dependence on Ghazālī, though, confounds the writer; because once again, Mohamed, who is arguing against innate evil dwelling in man, cites an Islamic scholar fastidiously elucidating man's innate evil tendencies.

In addition, Mohamed appears to perceive Ghazālī as holding Satan fully responsible for the Commanding Soul's evil activity. However, Mohamed perhaps misunderstands Ghazālī's particular use of "Shayṭān" during his "self-dynamic" discourse. Following Ghazālī's explanation about the "four flaws" (predatory, bestial, satanic, and godly) ingrained in man's "nature and composition," Ghazālī then *symbolizes* these forces by categorizing them into four personalities: "pig" (خنزير), "dog" (كلب), "Satan" (شيطان), and a "wise man" (حكيم).[640] It is true that Ghazālī blames Satan's external schemes for causing man to commit evil deeds, but he does this *after* categorizing man's innate "four flaws" as a pig, dog, Satan, and a wise man. For example, in one instance Ghazālī writes about man obeying Satan, but because the term "Satan" in actuality refers to غضب and شهوى, then in reality Ghazālī does not blame Satan for man's evil deeds, but depicts a person overcome by these two innate evil forces.[641] More specifically, Ghazālī in this example teaches that man's nature contains innate evil

---

[640]Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din*, 885.

[641]Ibid., 886.

tendencies through the satanic force, and these tendencies originate in the Commanding Soul.

Mohamed affirms another significant point while writing about the "self-dynamic" belonging to Ghazālī. Similar to Rāzī's teaching (pg. 168), Mohamed teaches that despite man's good nature beginning at birth through *fiṭrah*, because man's "faculty of justice" lacks until "the age of discretion", then as a result a person is unable "to control his passion (*hawa*) and cannot choose to refrain from wrongdoing."[642] The "faculty of justice" that Mohamed mentions refers to the force inside of man trying to safeguard the soul's diverse forces from exceeding the proper "psycho-spiritual" balance that man needs in order to follow Allah's plan. More precisely, Ghazālī's "faculty of justice" works within the heart through "knowledge" and "will;" but until a child reaches "sexual maturity" (بلوغ) man's "faculty of justice" remains out of commission even while lust, anger, and the five senses are fully operational.[643]

The fact that Mohamed simultaneously promotes man's goodness *and* his inability to "control" himself until the approximate age of fifteen,[644] again demonstrates the way he de-emphasizes human beings' ontological evil. Mohamed, from Ghazālī's teaching, makes a clear connection between desire's (هوى's) evil tendency and man's "wrongdoing." However, since the Qur'an teaches that "desire" belongs to the Commanding Soul, Mohamed unknowingly admits evil tendencies exist within the soul

---

[642]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 109.

[643]Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din*, 882-83.

[644]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 128.

and that man's ontological evil (Commanding Soul) monopolizes his innate teleological good (*fiṭrah*) for at least thirteen years.

Lastly, Ghazālī's discussion about the diverse forces working within man's heart from the time a child is *born* intersects another significant point relating to Mohamed's teleological approach to defining man's nature. Meaning, one criterion about *fiṭrah* which Mohamed makes an unconditional requirement in his approach to defining man's nature requries that its innate good exists at the time of childbirth. Mohamed provides numerous examples stressing this point. In the book's first instance, Mohamed writes:

> Suffice it to say that linguistic and positive religious explanations have one thing in common: both define *fiṭrah* as an inborn natural predisposition which cannot change, and which exists at birth in all human beings.[645]

For example, Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, the Core *ḥadīth*, and Allah's pre-existential covenant with man (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172) corporately affirm Ghazālī's statement that a child is born with *fiṭrah*. Yet, later, Mohamed also writes that man's soul "enters" into a child while in the mother's womb.[646] Therefore, in that Mohamed and Ghazālī's teachings affirm that both *fiṭrah's* innate good and the Commanding Soul's innate evil exist in a child from birth, why does Mohamed refrain from defining man's nature in Islam as dual?

Analysis. Besides the Core *ḥadīth* encouraging Mohamed's teleological emphasis regarding man's *good* nature, it also provides him with a second argument that *de-emphasizes* the soul's innate evil tendencies. However, Mohamed's own terminology

---

[645]Ibid., 13.

[646]Ibid., 126.

admits that man's struggle against evil derives from two sources: 1) the lower-self and 2) social circumstances. Mohamed further uses certain phrases describing the lower-self that insinuates the soul's evil tendency, such as: "potential for wrong", "negative tendency", and "liberated from bondage". Mohamed also applies Ghazālī's "self-dynamic" discussion to construct his "psycho-spiritual" philosophy that diminishes innate evil tendencies within man's soul. Ghazālī's "self-dynamic" description, however, teaches that evil satanic forces (i.e. anger and lust) combine with others to form man's "nature and composition". Moreover, Mohamed asserts that for at least thirteen years man's evil "desire" reigns over his innate good. Consequently, it appears that the Commanding Soul's innate evil plays the leading role in man's nature during some of the most critical developmental years in a child's life. Therefore, even though Mohamed alleges evil enters man solely through external sources, his terminology and Ghazālī's "self-dynamic" discussion prove the opposite.

In summary, this second major section illustrates the manner in which Mohamed de-emphasizes the soul's ontological evil tendencies. Mohamed demonstrates this by poorly citing his information regarding man's "psycho-spiritual" philosophy, and also by inadequately providing any solid qur'anic references or commentary relating to the soul's "negative character" in the Qur'an. When Mohamed does cite a Muslim scholar, he chooses the Ṣūfī Tustarī whose Commanding Soul definition completely supports the writer's Chapter 3 findings. Just as importantly, though, Mohamed quotes a Ṣūfī scholar whose exposition on man's vicegerent role explains *why* Allah intentionally creates Adam with the Commanding Soul's innate evil. Finally, in the writer's last point Mohamed uses the Core *ḥadīth* in order to prove that man's evil solely results from

negative external factors. Mohamed's argumentation is puzzling, however, for two reasons: 1) his very own terminonlogy admits the soul has a "negative tendency", and 2) he cites Ghazālī who teaches that a satanic force resides within man's nature.

Conclusion

Mohamed writes a book towards the end of the twentieth century unequivocally upholding man's *good* nature through *fiṭrah*. Mohamed alleges that his view represents universal Islam's despite the Qur'an and respected Muslim theologians admitting the Commanding Soul's innate evil. Mohamed in his book, notwithstanding, warrants that man's nature in Islam is good using two key arguments. First of all, Mohamed's approach to defining man's nature emphasizes man's teleological good. As he categorizes *fiṭrah* into four official views—Predestinarian, Neutral, Positive, and Dual—Mohamed supports the Positive View which accentuates *fiṭrah's* religious purpose in man. In addition, Mohamed's opposition to Sayyid Quṭb and 'Alī Sharī'atī's Dual View reveals that he establishes his arguments upon whether or not *fiṭrah's* essence harmonizes with Allah's noble plan for man on earth. Furthermore, as Mohamed justifies his support for man's teleological good through *fiṭrah*, he uses four key Islamic texts: 1) the Core *ḥadīth* in which he emphasizes *fiṭrah's* relationship to Islam, 2) Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 in which he highlights *fiṭrah's* connection to *tawḥīd*, 3) Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172 in which he depicts Allah's lordship in man through *fiṭrah*, and 4) Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72 in which he explains man fulfilling his vicegerent role through following *fiṭrah*. This teleological trend continues strong into the twenty-first century.

Second of all, Mohamed argues man's nature is solely good in Islam by de-emphasizing man's ontological evil. Mohamed scarcely supports his Commanding Soul

description with ample references from the Qur'an or Muslim commentators. The single commentator Mohamed references, though, the Ṣūfī Tustarī, surprisingly confirms the writer's Chapter 3 findings. Furthermore, Mohamed's last premise de-emphasizing man's innate evil tendencies uses the Core *ḥadīth* as its cornerstone. Man commits evil, Mohamed claims, solely due to external "social circumstances." Yet, numerous times Mohamed's own terminology acknowledges that man's "self" contains a "negative tendency" or needs to be delivered from "bondage." Mohamed also supports Ghazālī's "self-dynamic" description which overtly teaches that man's nature includes a satanic force; hence, defeating his premise that states ontological evil does not reside in man's nature.

Therefore, the writer contends with Mohamed's view regarding mankind's human disposition, stating that man's nature in Islam is not solely good, but rather, *dual*. The many verses in the Qur'an, traditions, and respective commentary which clearly project religious connotations into *fiṭrah's* meaning, warrants Mohamed's teleological approach to defining man's nature as good. At the same time, however, the Commanding Soul's innate evil in the Qur'an and Muslim scholars' commentary cannot be dismissed. Moreover, Mohamed downplays the Commanding Soul's presence in the Qur'an, but actually his own words and any commentator he cites acknowledges the soul's ontological evil. Lastly, the writer concedes Satan's importance as man's enemy in the Qur'an, but his antagonistic personality is not equivalent to the Commanding Soul's evil.

CHAPTER 5

BUILDING A MISSIONAL METHODOLOGY

The missiological task requires that Christians effectively communicate Christ's gift of eternal life to the nations.[647] Fundamental to this task are conversations relating to the state of man's nature—good or evil. Muslim-Christian dialogue over this subject inevitably exposes a longstanding theological dilemma between Islam and Christianity. Thus, the significance that Chapter 2 and 3 have in this stalemate between Muslims and Christians over man's inner disposition cannot be overstated. From Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 and the Core *ḥadīth*, Muslims believe that Allah creates mankind upon *fiṭrah*; and Mohamed's Positive View simply represents *fiṭrah's* classical representative, Ibn Taymiyyah.

Twenty-first century Muslims, therefore, state that God creates all men with a good nature that actively pursues *tawḥīd*. In response, Christians, aspiring to faithfully communicate the Gospel, continue speaking about Adam's sin and its tragic effects on the human race. Muslims, though, reject outright any notion resembling Christianity's doctrine of inherited sin. As a result, this missiological dilemma transpiring between Christians and Muslims appears unending.

Aiding the Christian-witness, Chapter 3 unveils within Islam an innate evil tendency inside the human soul which can help solve this evangelistic impasse. Albeit a

---

[647]Donald G. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 1st ed., vol. 1 (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1978), 7.

topic seldom discussed or understood by Muslims, the Qur'an teaches that God creates all men with a Commanding Soul. The Commanding Soul incites man to do evil; and moreover, never ceases to wage war against the Tranquil Soul. In view of this vital information from Islamic sources that exposes the Muslim man's disposition towards evil, missiologists are able to apply Nicholls' advice to "rethink" their "biblical theology" when interacting with people from other cultures and beliefs. Nicholls writes: "The contextualization of the gospel is the task of cross-cultural communication."[648] The writer, therefore, accepts Nicholls' challenge and formulates a "missional methodology"[649] which operates upon the *new* premise that man's nature in Islam is dual—innately good (due to *fiṭrah*) and evil (due to the Commanding Soul).

The Missiological Dilemma

Woodberry writes that a Christian's Gospel presentation from a Muslim's perspective may easily translate into a message that is anything but "good news".[650] This is because Islam professes a "diametrically opposite" view of salvation compared to Christianity's whereby Muslims have no sinful nature by which to be "saved."[651] Moreover, Faruqi states that God's creation, principally mankind, embodies divine goodness, not sinfulness; and hence, each human can achieve salvation by submitting

---

[648]Bruce J. Nicholls, *Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003), 53-55.

[649]Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 47.

[650]John Dudley Woodberry, *"Different Diagnoses of the Human Condition," in Muslims & Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. John Dudley Woodbery, Crucial Issues in Witness among Muslims (Monrovia, CA: MARC Publications, 1989), 149.

[651]Al-Faruqi, *Islam and Other Faiths*, 15.

himself to Allah's revelation. In other words, why would Muslims consider the Gospel "good news" when Christians inform them that they are sinful, but Islam teaches them that they are born solely good due to *fiṭrah*?[652]

Man's good nature in Islam ultimately means that a Muslim's salvation fully rests upon his effort alone. This is why Faruqi writes that if a man attempts to achieve salvation by any means other than "his own doing . . . [then] it is worthless".[653] In fact, the Qur'an repeats this individualistic and work-based concept four times (Sūrat al-An'ām: 164; Sūrat al-Isrā': 15; Sūrat al-Fāṭir: 18; Sūrat al-Najm: 38-42). For example, Sūrat al-Najm: 38-42 says:

أَلَّا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ (٣٨) وَأَن لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنسَٰنِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ (٣٩) وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُۥ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ (٤٠) ثُمَّ يُجْزَىٰهُ ٱلْجَزَآءَ ٱلْأَوْفَىٰ (٤١) وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ٱلْمُنتَهَىٰ (٤٢)

Namely, that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another; (38) That man can have nothing but what he strives for; (39) That (the fruit of) his striving will soon come in sight; (40) Then will he be rewarded with a reward complete; (41) That to thy Lord is the final Goal; (42)

In light of Islam's optimistic assessment of man's nature which in turn prompts Muslims to believe that they do not *need* Christ and are able to save themselves, it is expected, then, that Islam rejects Christianity's sinful view of human nature due to Adam's sin. Islam's doctrine of *fiṭrah* and Christianity's doctrine of inherited sin, therefore, form one of the missionary's chief missiological dilemmas when witnessing to Muslims. In order to better understand this ongoing missiological dilemma, the writer in the following three subsections illustrates: 1) the Muslim's description of the Adam and Eve narrative; 2) the Christian's description of the Adam and Eve narrative; and 3) the missiological need to contextualize.

---

[652]Ibid., 84.

[653]Ibid., 15.

The Muslim's Description of the Adam and Eve Narrative

Approximately five years ago a Muslim and Christian professor from the same university collaborated to co-author a book, providing them with a unique two-fold platform. In the book's first half, Kateregga, representing Islam, fields certain theological topics organized into separate chapters, and at the end of each one, Shenk offers a Christian response. The particular topic leading Kateregga to write most succinctly about man's nature in Islam occurs in the third chapter titled "Adam and Hauwa", or "Adam and Eve".

Kateregga makes two unmistakable points during his literary discourse with his Christian counterpart about the earth's first two inhabitants. The first point that Kateregga weaves throughout the chapter features Adam's vicegerent role. In the second point, Kateregga uses man's *fiṭrah* to distance himself from Christianity's view that Adam's sin mars human nature.

The first vicegerent. In Islam, Kateregga begins, God creates human beings for a noble purpose. Prior to creating Adam, God announces to the angels, "I will create a vicegerent on earth" (Sūrat al-Baqarah: 30). Adam's divine role makes him God's representative which in turn endows him with the weighty responsibilities to worship Allah and serve as earth's caretaker.[654] Despite Kateregga's admittance that most Muslims are unsure with what the phrase "My spirit" means, he still explains that Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 28-30 separates Adam's vicegerent status from that of the animals, *jinn*, and angels. This qur'anic passage states:

---

[654]Kateregga and Shenk, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, 42.

وإذْ قال ربُّك للملٰئكة إنّى خـٰلقٌ بشرًا مّن صلْصـٰلٍ مّنْ حمإٍ مّسْنُونٍ (٢٨) فإذا سوّيْتُهُۥ ونفخْتُ فيه من رُّوحى فقعُوا لهُۥ سـٰجدين (٢٩) فسجد ٱلملٰئكةُ كُلُّهُمْ أجْمعُون (٣٠)

Behold! Thy Lord said to the angels: "I am about to create man, from sounding clay from mud moulded into shape; (28) "When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My spirit, fall ye down in obeisance unto him." (29) So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together: (30)

Kateregga writes that there are some "modern Muslim scholars" who interpret God breathing his "spirit" into man to mean that humans contain "a certain Godlikeness."[655] On the contrary, though, "orthodox Islam" renounces man's likeness to God. Islam instead exalts Allah's total "transcendence", stressing that God's "spirit" symbolizes man's "dignified" occupation on earth.[656] 'Āṭī affirms Kateregga's Islamic view about God's first vicegerent, and further adds: "God created man to worship Him, not to be His equal, rival, the perfect incarnation or absolute embodiment of His goodness."[657] Adam's vicegerent duties to worship Allah and take care of the earth, from Kateregga's perspective, portray Islamic manhood.[658]

Adam's sin forgiven. Kateregga readily acknowledges that Adam and Eve disobey God in *jannah* by eating from the "tree" (Sūrat al-Baqarah: 35). After succumbing to Satan's temptation, though, Adam and Eve remorse and confess their transgression (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 23). Allah the "Most Merciful" then responds by sending Adam and Eve "down" to the earth, forgiving them, and providing them his guidance (Sūrat al-Baqarah: 36-38). Kateregga writes:

---

[655]Ibid.

[656]Ibid.

[657]Ḥammūdah 'Abd al-'Āṭī, *Islam in Focus*, ed. Shaykh Salif Al-Husayin and Mustapha Abu Sway, rev. ed. (Beltsville, MD: Amana, 1998), 32.

[658]Ezzati, *Islam and Natural Law*, 70.

> Nevertheless man's presence on earth is not a punishment, but rather a test of his commitment to the will of Allah. Although He sent them to earth after Satan's temptation, He certainly forgave them.[659]

Kateregga's phrase "He certainly forgave them" is loaded with meaning and relates directly to Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. God forgiving Adam means that Allah restores the post-transgression relationship to its original vicegerent status with no change occurring to his inborn *fiṭrah*. Kateregga writes:

> All people are born as true Muslims, innocent, pure, and free (Qur'an 30:30). No single act which has warped the human will. Any concept of original sin is contrary to the true teachings of Islam. It is not a sin for man to be fallible . . . Although man is a good and responsible being, committing sinful acts is the responsibility of the actual offender. According to the Muslim witness, sin is not hereditary, for no man is born a sinner. Similarly sin is not communal in nature nor is it transferable . . . Sin is acquirable, but not innate, and therefore, if man rightly uses those special qualities which he has been endowed with, he can easily avoid sin. Sin is not inevitable, because man is not sinful.[660]

Adam's sin in *jannah* affects mankind's *physical* location but not *spiritual* vocation. Therefore, Kateregga states plainly that due to *fiṭrah* "All people are born as true Muslims . . . [they are] innocent, pure and free (Qur'an 30:30)." God forgiving Adam's sin, according to Kateregga, further communicates that "orthodox Islam" categorically rejects the concept of "original" or "innate" sin. Ezzati similarly writes that "Islam repudiates original or hereditary guilt or evil."[661] Faruqi states "Islam entertains no idea of 'the fall of man', no concept of 'original sin'";[662] and 'Āṭī teaches that man's *fiṭrah* opposes Adam's "hereditary criminality . . . [which] has no place in the teachings of Islam."[663] In other words, these modern Muslim scholars unanimously confirm

---

[659]Kateregga and Shenk, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, 44.

[660]Ibid., 45.

[661]Ezzati, *Islam and Natural Law*, 70.

[662]Al-Faruqi, *Islam and Other Faiths*, 84.

[663]'Abd al-'Āṭī, *Islam in Focus*, 32.

Kateregga's representation of Islam regarding Adam's sin. Thus, despite the first vicegerent's transgression, God forgives him; and as a result, mankind's human nature remains good. In addition, sin refers foremost to an external act because innate evil does not dwell in man.

The Christian response. Shenk first answers Kateregga's Islamic discourse concerning Adam and Eve by clarifying Christianity's view about "God breathing his spirit" into Adam. The biblical account (Gen 2:7)[664] of the Islamic version states that "the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." Shenk agrees with Kateregga's statement about orthodox Islam's aversion to man adopting a "certain Godlikeness". However, Shenk specifies that the biblical account does not mention God breathing his "spirit" into Adam, but "the breath of life" instead.[665] Man, Shenk agrees, does not *look* like God or vice-versa; but in creation's biblical account God inserts into man great honor and purpose. God accomplishes this by creating Adam and Eve "in His own image" (Gen 1:27). Adam is not God, nor does he physically look like him; but God's "image" in Adam, Shenk writes, gives him the noble life-task of exhibiting "profound Godlike qualities."[666] Primarily, God's image in Adam means that "people have the capability to fellowship with God" and "know" him.[667]

---

[664]The NAS version of the Bible is used unless otherwise noted.

[665]Kateregga and Shenk, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, 46.

[666]Ibid.

[667]Ibid.

With regards to Kateregga's point that in the Qur'an "God forgives Adam's sin," Shenk simply states that "When people rebel against God, they become evil and sinful." Adam's sin not only "spoiled" God's image in him, but also his progeny's.

The Christian's Description of the Adam and Eve Narrative

The co-authored book, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, offers Shenk the same opportunity Kateregga enjoyed, but from a Christian perspective. Similar to Kateregga, Christianity's view by Shenk highlights two definite points. First of all, Shenk begins construing his Christian viewpoint by underscoring that God creates Adam and Eve in his image. Afterwards, Shenk finishes the chapter by emphasizing humanity's sinfulness as a result of Adam's sin.

Made in God's image. Above all else, Shenk considers Christianity's Creation account a glorious event, with man being its zenith. After God creates the "beasts" and "creeping things" to inhabit the earth, he finishes his creative work on the sixth day by making man and woman. Shenk quotes Genesis 1:26-27 which says:

> Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

When God forms Adam by breathing "the breath of life" into him (Gen 2:7), he becomes a "living soul". Shenk stresses that God's image coheres to man's soul rather than his physical features. Therefore, in Shenk's view, the image of God brands Adam and Eve with "deep spiritual" predilection.[668]

---

[668]Ibid., 129.

According to Shenk, thorough biblical witness produces seven "dimensions" regarding what it means for God to make Adam and Eve in his image:[669]

1) Man and woman's humanity partakes equally in connecting spiritually with God.
2) Mankind can comprehend God's creation and maintain it.
3) Diverse civilizations thrive throughout the earth.
4) Each human being through his conscience knows good from evil.
5) All peoples sense the need to improve and progress themselves.
6) Humans understand there is life after death.
7) People can experience meaningful relationships with God and humans.

Despite Shenk's cataloguing God's image into seven "dimensions", a more relational view monopolizes his attention. "He [God] desires to relate to humans in joyous and personal fellowship", Shenk writes.[670] Thus, God implants his image into every man for the sole purpose of entering into a "covenant relationship" with human beings, and so that he becomes mankind's "heavenly Father".[671] In short, Shenk's Christian standpoint informs that God's image manifests itself most fully in man as humans actively delight in a covenant relationship with their Creator.

Humanity's sinfulness. Shenk's overflowing praise for God creating Adam and Eve in his image abruptly ends in the chapter's second half. Despite God outfitting Adam and Eve with divine raiment, they unwisely misuse their freedom by disobeying God's command and eat from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:17). Shenk describes that Adam and Eve's dismal fidelity to God yields catastrophic repercussions not only for them, but also for the entire human race. Shenk writes:

---

[669]Ibid., 130-31.

[670]Ibid., 131.

[671]Ibid., 131-32.

> The witness of the Bible is that this act of rebellion by our first parents seriously and tragically distorted and spoiled the humanity created in the image of God. Although hints of the image of God remain, humankind has collectively turned away from God, and sinfulness pervades us individually and collectively. Our sinfulness is a cancer which destroys (Rom. 3:23).[672]

After eating from the forbidden tree, Shenk recounts evidence that proves Adam and Eve's "rebelliousness" did indeed "spoil" their humanity. He points out that when God appears in the garden to meet with Adam and Eve for the first time after their disobedience, they act "afraid and ashamed" to speak with him.[673] They also hide from God, which Shenk attests proves their broken "covenantal relationship". "God did not break covenant with them", Shenk writes, "They broke their covenant with God."[674] However, from Shenk's view, Adam and Eve's withdrawal from God's presence in the garden symbolically continues to present-day. "This is the story of human history—the story of human kind rejecting God, turning away from him", but remarkably, Shenk states, God continues to love man by re-inviting him to a "covenantal relationship."[675]

The Muslim response. Kateregga replies to his Christian colleague by reiterating man's God-given ability to obey divine revelation. In the Islamic and Christian account, Kateregga writes, God rouses man by "breathing" into him. In Islam, God's "spirit" imparts man with certain "divine qualities"; specifically, they are "knowledge, will, and power of action."[676] By blessing man with these "divine

---

[672]Ibid., 133.

[673]Ibid.

[674]Ibid.

[675]Ibid.

[676]Ibid., 134.

qualities", Kateregga repeats that God imparts great "dignity" to creation's highest form. Kateregga writes:

> This dignity is the natural right of both male and female and of all people regardless of race, language, or culture. The dignity of man is the supreme privilege of being the servants or slaves of Allah. It is in total submission to the will of Allah that the dignity of humankind is most fully evident.[677]

Kateregga resolves that Christianity's awful view of human nature, due to Adam's sin, is utterly undignified. Yes, it is true, Adam and Eve disobey God, but they repent, enjoy God's forgiveness, and continue fulfilling their noble vicegerent duties.

The Missiological Need to Contextualize

Evangelical Christianity's message claims that Christ's salvation is available to the world through Jesus' "atoning sacrifice."[678] Evangelical Christians are therefore heavily missions oriented, desiring to participate in Christ's command to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt 28:19). Before the missionary embarks on this Spirit-dependent journey to people living in Islamic countries, though, he must "have a firm grasp of the essentials of Christianity".[679] Parshall narrows these "essentials" down to ten. The "biblical" truths which Parshall challenges missionaries to effectively communicate with Muslims are:[680] 1) the Scriptures are inerrant and inspired; 2) the Triune God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; 3) Jesus Christ is born of a virgin, fully God and fully man; 4) belief in Christ's sacrifice on the cross redeems man from his sins;

---

[677]Ibid.

[678]Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 7.

[679]Phil Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 83.

[680]Ibid., 83-84.

5) Jesus Christ rose from the dead and sits at the Father's right hand; 6) human nature is sinful in need of Christ's redemption through the Holy Spirit; 7) the Holy Spirit convicts people of sin; 8) the Christian's mission is in calling people to confess their sins and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord; 9) Christ's second coming; and 10) the resurrection of the dead, either to eternal life or eternal punishment. Parshall further writes that the missionary must be "keenly aware of the points at which the Christian message clashes with Islam."[681] In this case, all ten "essentials of Christianity", to some degree, "clash."

In fact, the above dialogue between professors Kateregga and Shenk attempts to illustrate this theological "clash" constantly occurring among Muslims and Christians. Kateregga, honoring the dignity Allah bestows upon Adam, lifts up man's vicegerent role while minimizing Adam's sin due to God's forgiveness and *fiṭrah*. In reply, Shenk, faithfully articulates God creating Adam and Eve in his image, and then describes the corruption that takes place in human nature once Adam sins in the garden. This dialogue between Kateregga and Shenk endeavors to locate the exact point where the theological "clash" concerning man's sinful nature occurs. Indeed, theological differences occur throughout their discourses about Adam and Eve, but none more blatant than Kateregga's refusal to accept Shenk's doctrine of inherited sin. This theological "clash-point" between Kateregga and Shenk, then, helps demonstrate the missionary's need to find other biblical ways, besides mentioning Adam's sin, to communicate that man's nature is sinful.

---

[681] Ibid., 83.

For this reason, it is the writer's conviction, and after spending over twenty years interacting with Muslims, that one of the greatest theological barriers deterring Muslims from believing in Jesus Christ is Parshall's sixth essential truth. Citing it in full, Parshall writes:

> We believe that man was created in the image of God; that he has sinned and thereby incurred both physical and spiritual death and that all men are consequently born with a sinful nature: and we, therefore, believe in the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit and on man's part repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.[682]

Only existing in essential truth number six does man's dire *need* for Jesus Christ's "regeneration" present itself. The remaining essential truths, although critically paramount, simply state theological facts which either directly or indirectly relate to Jesus Christ. However, it is *because* "all men are consequently born with a sinful nature . . . [that we] believe in the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit . . . [through] faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mohamed actually implies his lack of need for a Savior when he writes, "No amount of confession or repentance can save the Christian from the belief in Christ as the Saviour."[683] Mohamed's matter-of-fact statement represents Islam's because Muslims do not understand the seriousness of their sinful condition. Meaning, most Muslims cannot fathom why Christians trust in Christ because they fail to appreciate the pressing *need* for salvation. Faruqi explains Islam's position the best concerning this matter. He writes that there is no *need* for a "saviour" because man is "either positively good or neutral, but

---

[682]Ibid., 84.

[683]Mohamed, *Fitrah*, 31.

not evil";[684] so therefore, Muslims reject Christ as *Savior* because, so far, the proper awareness concerning their evil human nature from which they *need* to be saved, eludes them.

Missiologists recognize the missionary's responsibility to contextualize Parshall's sixth essential truth within an Islamic context. They are also well acquainted with Islam's Positive View of human nature and on occasion seem to almost anticipate Muslims rejecting Christianity's doctrine of inherited sin. As a whole, though, missiologists are uncertain how to explain man's sinfulness to Muslims apart from reverting to the Adam and Eve narrative. The following subsection seeks to illustrate this missiological reality by first surveying a cross section of missiologists' works instructing Christians about man's nature in Islam. While accomplishing this, the writer also highlights the minimal contextualization occurring by the missiologists as they teach their readers how to share the Gospel in response to Islamic beliefs.

Missiological reality. Saal provides an excellent example of the presiding missiological reality. As he exhorts his readers to share their Christian faith with Muslims, Saal stresses that they need to contextualize the Gospel message within the Muslim's qur'anic mindset. Saal further testifies that the Qur'an "is probably the most powerful cultural influence in Muslim society."[685] A Christian must definitely not "ignore" the qur'anic witness on theological issues, Saal writes, for doing this would

---

[684]Al-Faruqi, *Islam and Other Faiths*, 15.

[685]Saal, *Reaching Muslims for Christ*, 151.

assuredly ruin the Christian's "credibility" with Muslims.[686] When Saal writes about [687]"five essential ideas" that "are foreign" to the "Christian worldview", number two on his list is "human goodness". Man is not sinful in Islam, but good, Saal writes. Furthermore, in Islam's Creation account, Saal informs his readers that Adam sins, but that God forgives him. Saal does not mention *fiṭrah*, but instead informs his readers that "Islam categorically rejects the biblical doctrine of the moral fall."[688] In Saal's book instructing Christians how to share their faith with Muslims, he provides minimal attention to giving biblical truth that will help Christians share about man's sinful nature within the Muslim's qur'anic mindset. Actually, Saal does the opposite. In another chapter under a section titled "The Nature of Humanity", he reiterates that man's nature in Islam is not "sinful", and then simply states that man's sinfulness in Christianity is due to "Adam's disobedience".[689] Saal knows contextualization is critical, but with regards to teaching Christians about *how* to communicate man's sinful nature to Muslims, the missiological reality reigns; Saal reverts to Adam's sin which he knows Muslims "categorically reject".

Anyabwile further embodies the ongoing missiological reality. He writes,

> One thing we have to do in sharing the gospel with our Muslim friends and coworkers is call them to respond urgently to the danger and corruption of sin in their lives.[690]

---

[686]Ibid., 79.

[687]Ibid., 43-44.

[688]Ibid., 44.

[689]Ibid., 69.

[690]Thabiti M. Anyabwile, *The Gospel for Muslims: An Encouragement to Share Christ with Confidence* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2010), 48.

Anyabwile, immediately following his honorable plea for Christians to help their "Muslim friends" recognize their sinfulness, exhorts his readers to know the differences between the Christian and Muslim's view of man's nature. First of all, Anyabwile states that Muslims reject the biblical truth that God creates man in his own image. Secondly, he instructs that "Muslims deny original sin" and then briefly summarizes the biblical account of the Adam and Eve narrative. Thirdly, Anyabwile reminds Christians about the apostle Paul's teaching about inherited sin from Romans 5:12, 18-19 which says:[691]

> Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned . . . So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men . . . For as through the one man's disobedience the many were sinners . . .

The writer inquires: If Anyabwile truly desires Muslims "to respond urgently to the danger and corruption of sin in their lives", then might it be better for him to provide Christians with alternative biblical passages that they can share with Muslims which do not directly relate to the doctrine of "original sin" which he knows they reject?

Zaka's comments concerning this missiological reality are similar to Anyabwile's. Zaka writes:

> Conveying Christian concepts in a way that communicates most effectively to Muslims will be meaningful and life effecting. This process, called contextualization, is the interaction of the text of Scripture with a particular human context.[692]

After stressing contextualization, though, Zaka proceeds to exposit the biblical and qur'anic Adam and Eve narratives, correctly pointing out man's goodness in Islam and

---

[691]Ibid., 43-44.

[692]Bruce A. McDowell and Anees Zaka, *Muslims and Christians at the Table: Promoting Biblical Understanding among North American Muslims* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Pub., 1999), 247.

the lack of original sin. Zaka then teaches his readers how to help their Muslim friends know that they have fallen into sin with Adam. Zaka writes that Christians must

> show how God made a covenant with Adam, which he broke. Being the representative head of the human race, his broken relationship with God affected all his descendants.[693]

Although Zaka does well to use Adam's vicegerent title, "head of the human race", to connect with Muslims' qur'anic mindset, though, he falls short in providing his Christian readers with scriptures communicating man's sinful nature that Islamic theology does not wholly reject.

Rhodes and Miller both agree that a Muslim's opportunity to accept the Gospel drastically increases when he grasps his serious sinful condition. If a Muslim senses the gravity of his fallen sinful state, Rhodes writes, then it is likely that he will not "minimize . . . [his] need for . . .[Christ's] atonement."[694] What most distinguishes Rhodes and Miller's teachings, though, as they compare man's nature in Islam to that of Christianity's, is their mention of the Commanding Soul. Rhodes, like those previously listed, informs his readers that Islam denies man's sinfulness due to Adam's sin in the garden. However, he then cites the Commanding Soul as clear "evidence" in the Qur'an that man's nature is sinful.[695] Although Rhodes stops delving further into theological matters relating to the qur'anic soul, he does well in mentioning that the Qur'an's Commanding Soul *proves* innate evil exists in man's nature.

---

[693]Ibid., 126.

[694]Ron Rhodes, *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Muslims* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2002), 233.

[695]Ibid., 240.

Miller's third chapter titled "The Muslim View of Sin" is extensive and extremely valuable. In the introductory paragraph Miller writes:

> In the Christian view the gospel has to do with the crucial issues of sin and salvation. Yet we look in vain for those topics among the key Islamic principles. They lurk in the background, but are not lifted up. Thus the "and" in the title 'Muslims and the Gospel' becomes all-important. Its significance is that the connection must be made.[696]

Miller is correct when he states "key Islamic principles" lack mention about "sin and salvation" in Islam. These two "crucial issues" are indeed "lurking" in the Qur'an, and it is the Christian's duty to draw them into the Muslim's purview so his "connection" with the Gospel occurs. Miller does a solid job doing this. After re-emphasizing the Muslim's complacency towards sin, Miller writes about man's nature, linking *fiṭrah* (Sūrat al-Rūm: 30) to his vicegerent role. *fiṭrah* "inclines" man towards good and God, but "there is the other side of human nature . . . the dark side.[697] According to Miller, Allah gives man's human disposition "the capacity and potential for sinfulness as well as for piety."[698] Like Rhodes, Miller cites the Commanding Soul (Sūrat Yūsuf: 53) as evidence of "the dark side." He then states that the Commanding Soul's presence in a Muslim's life "sets the state for moral struggle."

Like Rhodes, Miller does well to mention the Commanding Soul and the daily battle it wages within every Muslim. Miller does not, however, develop the Commanding Soul's concept of innate evil any further. He exposits the qur'anic Adam and Eve narrative, defines the Qur'an's array of Arabic terms relating to sin, and

---

[696]Miller, *Muslims and the Gospel: Bridging the Gap: A Reflection on Christian Sharing*, 45.

[697]Ibid., 50.

[698]Ibid.

accomplishes an historical overview for Islam's "thinking about sin" (including excerpts on Ash'arī, Ghazālī, Taymiyyah, Quṭb, and Faruqi). Miller's comments about Ghazālī are particularly insightful and complement the writer's point that innate evil dwells in man. Miller's research deduces that Ghazālī, from his book *Iḥyā'*, teaches that "good and evil" are integral qualities of the "human heart" to which Miller estimates is Ghazālī's "signal contribution to the Islamic spiritual tradition."[699] Miller concludes the chapter by "connecting" Christians with practical guidelines about a Muslim's view of sin that they can apply in their Gospel conversations. Miller's fifth guideline, in the writer's view, pertains best to the Commanding Soul's qur'anic reality that innate evil exists in man's nature. Miller writes:

> Sin entails disobedience to God's commands and is the transgression of God's law, but these, as Al-Ghazālī pointed out, have to do with the condition of the human heart that produces them. Jesus the Messiah said: 'it is from within the human heart that evil intentions come: fornication, murder, adultery, avarice, weakness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person' (Mk 7:21-22).[700]

Miller's fifth point appropriately guides Christians to share the Gospel with their Muslim friends by "connecting" Ghazālī's teaching about man's "heart" with Jesus' teaching which focuses on what an evil heart produces. Unfortunately, Miller's comments about the Commanding Soul are brief. Furthermore, his guidelines do not give Christians more practical guidance about how they can communicate with their Muslim friends about man's sinful nature from scriptures that illustrate evil behavior is the product of man's innate evil.

---

[699]Ibid., 60.

[700]Ibid., 65.

Analysis. In the book that Kateregga and Shenk co-author, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, the theme that results in them discussing man's nature the most comes from the Adam and Eve narrative. Kateregga and Shenk, to some degree, find a "point of contact"[701] between the qur'anic and biblical Adam and Eve accounts: God creates Adam for a noble purpose. God breathing his "spirit" into Adam from Kateregga's view qualifies earth's first man for the "dignified" vicegerent role: worshipping Allah and caring for creation. Shenk informs that Adam's glorious purpose in the Christian account unfolds when God creates man in his "own image."

The missiological dilemma, however, ensues *after* Adam eats from the tree. Kateregga emphasizes that God forgives Adam's sin while equally emphasizing that man's first transgression causes no corruption to either his or his progeny's human nature. Adam's sin, though, Shenk states, "tragically" defaces Adam's human nature, including his descendants' as well. Shenk's Christian explanation about Adam's sin utterly belies Kateregga's Islamic logic, leaving little middle ground between them for further discussion.

This missiological dilemma exposes the dire need for missiologists to better contextualize the Gospel message as they attempt to communicate with Muslims about man's sinful nature. The missiological reality on the field or in current literature, however, unfortunately demonstrates otherwise. Whether from the writer's experience or literary research, a Christian's Gospel proposition that associates man's sinful nature with Adam's sin, repulses Muslims. Muslims also anticipate Christians sharing the Gospel

---

[701]Eugene Albert Nida, *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Harper, 1954), 261.

with them in this manner, as Kateregga illustrates, and are thus already pre-programmed to reject it. Moreover, the Qur'an repeatedly states plainly that God judges man according to *his* sins, but not for the transgressions of another.

Despite these glaring theological barriers, as a whole, Christian theologians and missiologists continue encouraging their readers to contextualize the Gospel message with Muslims while at the same time offering non-contextualized biblical explanations concerning man's sinful nature. In fact, Augustine (d. 430),[702] Luther (d. 1546),[703] Calvin (d. 1564),[704] and Barth (d. 1968)[705] write to their contemporary Western readers about man's inherited sinful nature in similar fashion to Shenk, Saal, Anyabwile, Zaka, Rhodes, and Miller. Obviously, from a missiological perspective this is unacceptable because Shenk, Saal, Anyabwile, Zaka, Rhodes, and Miller promote contextualizing the Gospel message within a Muslim's qur'anic mindset.

The writer commends Rhodes and Miller for instructing their readers that the Commanding Soul's presence in the Qur'an serves as evidence that innate evil exists in man's nature. Specifically, Miller adds to this crucial point by further teaching his readers how to share the Gospel using a more contextualized methodology. Nonetheless,

---

[702]Augustine, *On Grace and Original Sin* (Lexington, KY: Beloved Publishing, 2014), 37-48.

[703]Martin Luther, *Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will: A New Translation of De Servo Arbitrio (1525) Martin Luther's Reply to Erasmus of Rotterdam*, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (London: J. Clarke, 1957), 156.

[704]John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. Henry Beveridge, vol. 1 (Lexington, KY: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2011), 92-94.

[705]Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation: Church Dogmatics*, ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance, trans. Geoffrey William Bromiley, 2nd ed. (London; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), 55-58.

Muslim ministry demands a more comprehensive approach in order to properly equip Christians for long-term interaction with Muslims concerning this subject.

A Missiological Solution

Netland proposes that two of the most "fundamental" questions religious adherents should ask concerning their religions are: 1) What do their scriptures *teach* about man's "human predicament", and 2) How do their scriptures *solve* the "human predicament?[706] Depending on how accurately a religion addresses these two questions determines whether its followers spend eternity with or without the living God.[707] Shumack re-states Netland's argument, but in a way which more cogently explains the motivation behind this dissertation's thesis. Shumack writes, "Indeed, it is fair to say that if Muslims are right that humans are not trapped in sin, then biblical Christianity is false."[708] Much to the contrary, Christianity proves trustworthy *because* its scriptures admit that man's sinful condition "taints . . . all of his actions",[709] and *because* they teach that God's redemption in Christ successfully solves man's "human predicament".

Islam, however, states the opposite. Islam alleges that mankind is not "trapped in sin," and because human nature is good due to *fiṭrah*, then every human being has the God-given ability to save himself. This dissertation's third chapter, though, offers

---

[706]Harold A. Netland, *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 160.

[707]Ibid., 161.

[708]Richard Shumack, *The Wisdom of Islam and the Foolishness of Christianity* (Sydney, Australia: Island View Publishing, 2014), 70.

[709]Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 106.

information about the Commanding Soul which proves that in addition to *fiṭrah's* innate good, ontological evil also exists in man's nature. This data suggests, then, that Mohamed's Positive View is false. Hence, man's nature in Islam is actually dual: good *and* evil. Substantiating that the Islamic view of man's nature is dual proves extremely significant, because this means that Islam has been answering Netland's first question incorrectly for centuries; and this in turn thus weakens Islam's answer to the second question regarding how its scriptures *solve* the "human predicament." Meaning, if man's nature in Islam now contains innate evil, can man still save himself?

Furthermore, the missiological reality reveals that missiologists have accomplished minimal work relating to contextualizing the Gospel-truth about man's sinful nature within a Muslim's qur'anic mindset. The writer proposes that the time has come. Of course, some Christian theologians may waver in this strategy to mold the Christian's Gospel presentation more within an Islamic framework. However, what if there is even a slight chance that one of the reasons Muslims reject the Gospel is due to an ineffective Gospel presentation about man's sinful nature? Should not Christians want to immediately correct this shortcoming? Chapman, about this subject, writes,

> If the Christian Church has contributed to the misunderstanding and rejection [of the Gospel], we need to recognize that we have an obligation to look again more carefully at the way we articulate the message.[710]

Chapman further challenges Christians to cease sharing the Gospel with Muslims by using methods that "fight the old battles all over again". He also encourages the "Christian Church" to share the Gospel with Muslims in such a way that exploits

---

[710]Colin Chapman, *"Rethinking the Gospel for Muslims," in Muslims & Christians on the Emmaus Road*, ed. John Dudley Woodbery, Crucial Issues in Witness among Muslims (Monrovia, CA:

Islam's three primary worldview vulnerabilities. Interestingly, one of the most vulnerable Islamic worldviews that Chapman exhorts Christians to study and develop a plan for relates to Islam's "optimistic" analysis concerning the "human condition".[711]

The writer argues that Islam's "optimistic" verdict on man's nature is unrealistic, and heeds Chapman's advice to develop a plan. Specifically, the following section uses this dissertation's previous chapters' findings to build a three-step "missional methodology". Hiebert provides the theological foundation for this "missional methodology" and names the steps: "phenomenology", "ontology", and "missiology".[712]

1st Step: Phenomenology

Hiebert's three-step "missional methodology" naturally evolves as missionaries accomplish "missional theology".[713] "Missional theology" develops as the missionary, or "missional theologian":

> translate[s] and communicate[s] the gospel in the language and culture of real people in the particularities of their lives so that it may transform them, their societies, and their cultures into what God intends for them to be. Missional theology seeks to build the bridge between biblical revelation and human contexts.[714]

A "missional theology's" initial interest, according to Hiebert, studies the "human context," a task which he says "few have training".[715] "Missional theology," therefore,

---

MARC Publications, 1989), 105.

[711]Ibid., 118-19.

[712]Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 47.

[713]Ibid., 44.

[714]Ibid., 45.

[715]Ibid., 47.

with regards to constructing this dissertation's "missional methodology," comprises "building the bridge" between what the Scriptures teach about man's nature and what Muslims believe. Phenomenology's specific task, then, examines the Muslim's "human context," or his "local practices, rituals, beliefs, and worldviews".[716] Due to this dissertation's thesis concentrating singularly upon Muslims' religious beliefs, the writer's "missional methodology" builds phenomenology's first step solely upon what Islam's scriptures and scholars teach about man's nature.

Man's dual nature. In disagreement with Mohamed's Positive View which represents both classical and modern Islam, evidence from Chapter 2 and 3's findings suggest man's nature in Islam is dual. Without question, Muslim scholars in Chapter 2 exposit key Islamic scriptures such as Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 and the Core *ḥadīth* to explain God's teleological purpose in creating every man good according to *fiṭrah*. Likewise, Chapter 3 includes testimony from classical Muslim exegetes and scholars that the Qur'an teaches innate evil dwells in man. More specifically, many qur'anic verses highlight the Commanding Soul inciting man to do reprehensible acts. The arguments that Mohamed presents in Chapter 4 to uphold the Positive View are further unconvincing due to his confusing and at times contradictory statements concerning the Commanding Soul. The Muslim's "human context" regarding the "human predicament," as a result, states that man's nature in Islam is both innately good and evil, or dual. Therefore, this dissertation's second through fourth chapters' findings satisfy Hiebert's "missional methodology's" first step in phenomenology.

---

[716]Ibid., 48.

2nd Step: Ontology

Assembling a missional methodology entails filtering the phenomenological data through a biblical lens. In this case, since phenomenology's evidence concludes man's nature in Islam is dual, the following step necessitates determining the biblical standard for what the Scriptures teach about man's nature. Hiebert writes, "We need systematic and biblical theologies to understand the structure and story underlying the biblical narratives."[717] By researching information concerning what systematic theologians instruct regarding man's nature, "universal truth" may then pilot the missiological process rather than the "human context."[718] The following subsections provide four "universal truths" outlining a biblical view to man's nature. The writer names them: "God's Image," "Man's Soul," "Sin's Essence," and "Humanity's Guilt."

God's image. Man's nature in the biblical narrative comprises two dichotomous sides. Pannenberg describes humanity's disposition using the two words "dignity and misery".[719] Prior to fixating upon the "miserable" side to man's nature, though, Bloesch warns Christians from solely thinking unfavorably about humanity. Bloesch writes:

> In constructing a Christian anthropology we must not ignore the basic nobility of man. He comes from the hand of God, though he is not a part of God. He is essentially good, having been created in the image of God.[720]

---

[717]Ibid.

[718]Ibid., 49.

[719]Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 175.

[720]Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 89.

According to Bloesch, because God creates humans in his image, man's nature is "essentially good". Calvin agrees, emphasizing that if one chooses to direct his attention upon the human condition after "Adam's fall", then his conception about humanity's grandeur runs amiss. God creating human beings in his image, in Calvin's view, makes man the "noblest . . . and most admirable specimen of his justice, wisdom, and goodness".[721] Moreover, whether before or after "Adam's fall", Grudem writes that despite sin's entrance into man's nature, mankind still bears God's good image (Gen 5:1).[722]

The first instance the Scriptures mention God creating man in his image occurs in Genesis 1:26-27:

> Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Garrett answers the question regarding what God's image refers to in Genesis 1:26-27 by initially studying the Hebrew meanings "image" (צֶלֶם) and "likeness" (דְּמוּת). "Image", he states, can also mean "shade or shadow", while "likeness" can further mean "similitude". Garrett concludes his word-study on "image" and "likeness" by stating: "the great majority [OT and NT scholars] seems to hold to the synonymous view on the basis that the usage in Gen 1:26 is an instance of synonymous Hebrew parallelism."[723] Thus, the

---

[721]Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 90.

[722]Wayne A. Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, ed. Jeff Purswell (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 187.

[723]James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2000), 452-53.

phrase "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness", allows for multiple potential connotations. Man made in God's image, Garrett writes, might convey his divine commission to rule over God's creation (Gen 1:26-27; Ps 8:5-8) or to his intellectual ability to "reason". In addition, God's image could refer to man's "untested original innocence or obedience or perfection prior to" Adam's fall. Some theologians, Garrett states, believe God's image in man symbolizes mankind's spiritual faculty to enjoy relationships with God and fellow men.[724]

Frame's systematic theology concerning God's image in man offers tangible guidelines to its meaning. Through coupling God's "image" and "likeness" (Gen 1:26-27) to the immediate biblical context, i.e. "and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky . . .", Frame states that God's image communicates man's "lordship". Frame writes: "So the image of God consists of those qualities that equip man to be lord of the world, under God. What can these qualities be, but analogies of God's own lordship attributes?"[725] As a result, God's image in man, from Frame's standpoint, refines man's "lordship" capabilities into three general "offices": "kingly, prophetic, and priestly". The first "office" correlates with the "cultural mandate" which tasks man to care for all aspects of God's creation.[726]

God's speech forms Frame's second "office" whereby humans emulate God's "image" and "likeness" in "lordship". Man first manifests the prophetic office when

---

[724]Ibid., 454-60.

[725]John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2013), 784-86.

[726]Ibid., 786-87.

Adam obeys God by "naming the animals." From this "naming" event, which symbolizes Adam's authority over creation, man enacts the prophetic office by mirroring God's word which creates the world. In other words, just as God orders the world through speaking it into existence, mankind similarly uses his speech faculty for the purpose of accomplishing the cultural mandate. This includes all "creation ordinances" such as "procreation", "subduing the earth", working, the "weekly Sabbath, and marriage."[727] Frame describes the third "office", the Priestly, as relating to man's "lordship" over the earth through transporting God's presence wherever he travels. Man's priestly "office", Frame writes, not only subdues the earth through carrying God's presence (due to the divine image) to far off territories, but it equally leads man to worship the God whose image he bears.[728]

Grudem's description regarding God's image in man simplifies the previous definitions. He first highlights the inordinate "dignity" God imbues man with by melding his image onto him; and of course, Grudem states, God purposefully does this for "his own glory" (Isa 43:7; Eph 1:11-12) which subsequently underscores man's life-purpose.[729] Like Frame, Grudem derives the meaning of the words "image" and "likeness" (Gen 1:26-27) from their biblical context. Grudem's explanation, however, is more rudimentary. When God says, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness", his manner of speech, Grudem states, is unambiguous. Albeit remarkable,

---

[727]Ibid., 788-89.

[728]Ibid., 790-91.

[729]Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, 188-89, 92.

God's image in man communicates that "man is *like* God".[730] Specifically, because God is holy, man's image makes him a "moral" being. In that God is Spirit, man's divine design yearns for spiritual intercourse. Humans furthermore are rational creatures because God is wise; and because God's nature is triune, his image in humans inspires man to form relationships with creation, especially with men and women.[731]

Frame's additional comments about man's nature conclude this subsection. He states that God's image in man subsists within the overarching pronouncement the Lord made at the end of the sixth day. After creating man, God announces that his entire creation "was very good" (Gen 1:31). This means, Frame states, that all aspects of man's nature, before the fall, include God's goodness, e.g. in his "actions, thoughts, words, and deeds". Stating this in another way, Frame writes, God does not create humans in a "morally neutral state". Man's goodness, therefore, originates in God and also produces the good in him.[732]

Biblical conversation delving into understanding man's nature can easily transfix upon man's "misery" rather than the "dignity" God's image gives him, even *after* "Adam's fall." Remembering man's "nobility" and his "essential goodness" is paramount in order to avoid confusing man's present state with God's original intention. Systematic theologians throughout many past centuries offer numerous suggestions for the meaning of God's image in man. However, the initial biblical context (Gen 1:26-27)

---

[730]Ibid., 190.

[731]Ibid., 190-92.

[732]Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, 845-46.

for the terms "image" and "likeness", as Frame and Grudem suggest, implies that God's image in man relates directly to man's threefold "lordship" over creation and his remarkable "likeness" to the Creator. Systematic theology, hence, declares man's nature is good; and even though "Adam's fall" mars God's noble image, its "dignity" remains.

Man's soul. Discussing Christianity's view regarding man's nature causes systematic theologians to evaluate its immaterial loci from OT and NT texts. For example, Calvin ascribes God's image, or human nature's quintessence, to man's soul. Calvin writes that "man was created in the image of God . . . [and] though the divine glory is displayed in man's outward appearance, it cannot be doubted that the proper seat of the image is in the soul."[733] Christian anthropology contains a historical testimony, however, presenting a more intricate version of Calvin's view.[734] Garrett's research attests to this as he meticulously extrapolates the plethora of OT and NT words which infer man's immaterial substance.

The first biblical term Garrett lists relating to man's nature in the OT and NT is "soul" ("נֶפֶשׁ" or "ψυχή"). Man's soul in the OT encapsulates various meanings. The most obvious connotation conveys one's "physical life" (Gen 35:18; Exod 21:23; Job 2:6) or "feelings, emotion, desire, and appetite" (Gen 42:21; Isa 53:11).[735] The last two OT possible meanings either imply a person's life in its "totality" (Gen 2:7, 14:21) or to a

---

[733]Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 92.

[734]Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 181-95.

[735]Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, 498.

"synonymous" word for "self", "I", or "any one who" (Lev 5:1; Num 15:27).[736] The NT meanings are identical to the OT's except for one additional rendering which occurs in scriptures where Jesus teaches about the soul's "continued or restored life after death" depending on whether a person places their trust in him (Matt 10:28, 39, 16:25).[737]

A second OT and NT term depicting the incorporeal substance called "man" is "spirit" ("רוּחַ" or "πνεῦμα"). "Spirit" in the OT and NT may describe a person's "attitude" (Gen 41:8; Num 5:14; 1 Kings 10:4-5; Acts 17:6; 1 Pet 3:4), willful intent (Exod 35:21; Ezek 13:3; Mark 8:12), "life-breath or vitality" (Gen 6:17; Judg 15:19; Ps 135:17; Luke 23:46), or "heart" and "mind" (Ps 78:8; Ezek 18:31).[738] In addition, the OT and NT term "flesh" ("בָּשָׂר" or "σάρξ") indicates man's immaterial substance. In the OT "flesh" may refer to one's "spouse" (Gen 2:23), "blood relative" (Gen 37:27), or for making a contradistinction between man and God (Gen 6:12, 8:17; Isa 40:5).[739] The NT meaning of "flesh" exceeds OT usage. For example, NT passages which combine "flesh" and "blood" together denote mortal human essence (Matt 16:17; 1 Cor 15:50, 53).[740] NT scriptures further apply "flesh" to depict the corporeal "material of the human body." Perhaps the starkest nuance between the OT and NT usages of "flesh" occurs in the lack

---

[736]Ibid., 498-99.

[737]Ibid., 503.

[738]Ibid., 499, 503.

[739]Ibid., 500.

[740]Ibid., 503-04.

of the Hebrew term referring to "inherent evil."[741] The Greek term, however, consistently illustrates "the way of sin as opposed to the way of God" (Rom 8:6-8).[742]

In respect to man's metaphysical nature, the significance of the term "heart" from OT and NT usages ("לֵב" or "καρδία") is clear. In both testaments "heart" connotes "the center of man's thought and will" (Exod 35:5; 1 Kgs 3:9; Matt 22:37; Rom 10:10).[743] Whereas the "heart" symbolizes "man's thought and will," in the OT and NT, "bowels" ("מֵעֶה" or "σπλάγχνον") describes man's "seat of compassion or mercy" (Jer 31:20; Phil 1:8, 2:1).[744] Another NT term expressing man's inner composition is "mind." Garrett informs that there are three distinct NT words which translate into the English word "mind":[745] 1) νοῦς: a positive or negative reference to man's "will" or "intellect" (Rom 7:25; Eph 4:23), 2) διάνοια: a positive or negative reference to man's "mind" or "intellect" (Heb 8:10; 1 Pet 1:13; Eph 2:3), and 3) νόημα: a positive or negative reference to "mind" or "thoughts" (2 Cor 3:14; Phil 4:7).

The above OT and NT words describing man's incorporeal nature in the Scriptures are many. Frame, regarding some of these Hebrew and Greek terms, encourages his readers to resist thinking that each word "designates separate entities within us, so that, for example, the soul might be morally perfect while the spirit is still

---

[741]Ibid., 500.

[742]Ibid., 504.

[743]Ibid., 500-01, 504-05.

[744]Ibid., 501, 505.

[745]Ibid., 505-06.

wicked".[746] In other words, each biblical reference incorporating the previous OT and NT words explicitly describes man's incorporeal nature, without making division. Garrett writes:

> The Hebrew-oriented biblical writers referred to human beings by using numerous words. Those words were not intended, it seems, to compartmentalize humans into intricate subdivisions, and thus later Christians desiring to prove that there are two parts or three parts to human existence tend to ignore some of the biblical usages or to bend the biblical texts to their own theories.[747]

Grudem's research regarding trichotomy and dichotomy complements Garrett's view. Trichotomists subdivide man's nature into three parts: spirit, soul, and body. Dichotomists, on the other hand, oppose trichotomy alleging man's substance comprises simply a soul and body. "Everyone agrees that we have physical bodies", Grudem writes, but argues that both OT and NT references consistently illustrate that "spirit" and "soul" are basically "interchangeable".[748] For example, in John 12:27 Jesus says "Now My soul (ψυχή) has become troubled"; however, one chapter later John writes that "He [Jesus] become troubled in spirit (πνεῦμα)" (John 13:21). Is Jesus' immaterial substance "compartmentalized" into "intricate subdivisions", or are these two words "interchangeable"? Grudem, Calvin, Pannenberg, and Frame profess the latter.

Systematic theology states that man's immaterial substance abides not merely in the soul, but also in the spirit, flesh, heart, mind, bowels, etc. Attempts by some theologians at dissecting man's incorporeal essence into three (e.g. trichotomists) or more

---

[746]Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, 799.

[747]Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, 506.

[748]Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, 193-94.

parts generally disregard the OT's numerous terms referring to man's corporate being. Moreover, the NT consistently uses the terms "soul" and "spirit" synonymously.

Sin's essence. Theological discussions inquiring into man's nature routinely lead systematic theologians to analyze sin's essence. Meaning, properly comprehending *man's* nature obliges one to correctly evaluate *sin's* nature. What is sin? As Christian scholars reply to this question, one definitive theme surfaces; and their resounding answer stresses sin's *internal* essence.

According to Cairns, the "social and economic environment" demonstrates throughout history that these two public entities cannot "renovate the heart of man."[749] This is the case, Cairns writes, because both a society and its economy operate through ordinary men who are internally corrupt. In other words, the observable evil deeds that daily take place on earth come from a single source, a human one; and humans are internally depraved. Cairns argues his point by quoting Jesus' words from Mark 7:21-23 which state:

> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these things proceed from within and defile the man.

Frame also argues that sin's essence is internal and not a result of negative "social and economic" influences. His particular argument outlines God's standard for "human righteousness" and for the purpose of unmasking sin's internal nature. According to Frame, thorough study of the Scriptures reveals that God considers men's deeds "good or righteous" when they satisfy three conditions. Frame's first condition

---

[749]D. S. Cairns, *A System of Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1979), 66.

states that "good or righteous" acts come from obedience to God's word (Jas 4:11; 1 John 3:4). Frame's second condition makes good deeds contingent upon having the "proper goal", i.e. "God's glory (1 Cor 10:31) and the success of his kingdom (Matt 6:33)". Frame's third condition that man must meet states that "good or righteous" acts result from "true faith (Rom 14:23) and love (1 Cor 13:1-3)."[750] Frame's three conditions help expose sin's internal essence because even though a person might obey the Scriptures outwardly, if he does this "good" deed from a selfish motivation or with a bitter attitude toward God, then he did not do it to glorify the Lord, nor with a heart of love.[751] Consequently, according to Frame's understanding of the Scriptures, God does not credit this act of obedience as righteousness, but rather as sin. In short, Frame writes that "Our triperspectival understanding of sin helps us to understand that sin is a condition of the human heart"[752] (Gen 6:5-6, 8:21; Ps 14:1; Jer 17:9; Matt 12:33-35).

Peters exhorts his readers to focus on the soul when determining sin's culprit. His instruction about sin's internal essence is consistent with Frame's "triperspectival" standard for "good or righteous" acts. Peters writes: "At the heart of all sin is the failure to trust God. Sin is our unwillingness to acknowledge our creatureliness and dependence upon the God of grace."[753] Peters further discusses sin's internal essence when he writes:

> Inherent in sin is the denial of truth. We cover over our unwholesome motives and violent acts against others with a veneer of goodness . . . Perhaps an objective or scholarly approach to the truth

---

[750]Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, 848-49.

[751]Ibid., 849.

[752]Ibid., 850.

[753]Ted Peters, *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 8.

> of sin is foredoomed from the start. Perhaps the only way to get at the truth of sin is through confession.[754]

According to Peters, outward evil acts, such as ignoring God's word or committing hate crimes, are in reality just external indicators pointing to men's "unwholesome motives" that they "cover over". "Confession" to Peters, therefore, is vitally important to God, because unless humans acknowledge their own sin, then who else can possibly unearth it?

Bloesch's statement, "Bitterness in the soul is the seething caldron from which all manner of evil proceeds",[755] appropriately introduces Grudem and Pannenberg's teachings that illustrate sin's internal essence from the Ten Commandments. Similar to Frame, Grudem defines sin as "failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature."[756] To justify his definition of sin, Grudem cites the tenth commandment which says (Exod 20:17):

> You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

God's previous nine commandments "prohibit sinful actions", but the tenth commandment, Grudem states, condemns "sinful attitudes".[757] As a result, Pannenberg not only agrees with Grudem, but believes that the tenth commandment effectively sums up God's Law in its entirety because it exposes the "perverted nature of sin, i.e. evil desire."[758] Both Grudem and Pannenberg believe that the tenth commandment is an

---

[754]Ibid., 9.

[755]Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 92.

[756]Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, 210.

[757]Ibid.

[758]Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 240.

important verse to emphasize when discussing sin's essence because it shows that even in the OT God considers evil desires, like "coveting," sin. Purely defining sin as a failure to outwardly obey the Scriptures, then, in reality violates God's righteous standard for good deeds because the tenth commandment clarifies that it is the *inner* "desire" to "murder," "commit adultery," "steal," lie, and "covet" which best depicts sin's essence.[759] In fact, Pannenberg admits that Jesus founds his teachings in the gospels on this very concept of sin or righteousness' internal essence.[760]

Furthermore, with the exception of Jesus' instruction in the four gospels, Pannenberg finds no better NT teaching which displays man's evil inner disposition than that written by the Apostle Paul in Romans 7. Pannenberg states that Paul's instruction about his struggle to obey God's righteous Law brings to the forefront sin's internal essence. He writes, "Only in Paul does sin come to be seen as something that precedes commands and that is manifested and discovered by means of the law (Rom 7:7-11)."[761] Paul's sin-axiom in Romans 7, therefore, addresses man's sinful condition and how it actively opposes God's Law. Specifically, Pannenberg states that Paul's theology about sin in Romans 7 supports the OT "view of the corruption of the heart as the root of transgressions".[762] Thus, Pannenberg concludes that God's plan solves the human race's sin problem by sending Jesus to fulfill the New Covenant which transplants man's "corrupted" heart with a pure one.

---

[759]Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, 210.

[760]Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, 536.

[761]Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 239.

In summary, systematic theology states that sin's essence is internal, not external. Frame teaches that if man obeys God's word but does so with selfish motives or without true faith, then the Scriptures deem this obedient act as unrighteous, or sinful. Even God's tenth commandment teaches mankind that sin's essence results from man's evil desires; a truth which Jesus in the gospels and the Apostle Paul in Romans 7 constantly affirm.

Humanity's guilt. God creates the first man, Adam, in his image (Gen 1:26-27). Man's "essential nature," then, is good. Sadly, Adam disobeys God's command by eating from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen 2:17). After Adam's sin (Gen 3:6-7), or the fall, Adam and his progeny's human nature becomes "sinful". The Scriptures attest (Gen 9:6; Jas 3:9) that God's image in man is not lost after the fall, but that some "likeness" to the divine still remains. Grudem writes:

> After the fall, then, we are still in God's image—we are still like God and we still represent God—but the image of God in us is distorted; we are less fully like God than we were before the entrance of sin.[763]

Systematic theologians name this corporate "distortion" of God's image in man the "doctrine of inherited sin".[764] The following subsection highlights the two main themes that the writer notices regarding Christian theologians' views on inherited sin. The first theme discusses how Adam's sin makes all men sinful and subsequently guilty before

---

[762]Ibid.

[763]Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, 190.

[764]Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, 856.

God. The second theme surveys the many objections concerning the doctrine of inherited sin across history by Christian scholars.

The biblical passage that most systematic theologians reference in order to explain the doctrine of inherited sin is Romans 5:12-19.[765] Frame writes: "Scripture teaches the doctrine of inherited sin most clearly in Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22."[766] The former passage, however, is the most thorough, particularly regarding humanity's guilt as the result of Adam's sin. Prior to expositing this Pauline passage, Garrett notifies his readers about its two predominant points. First, Romans 5:12-19 teaches that all men are guilty due to Adam's sin, and thus, God condemns them to die. Secondly, it teaches that men are acquitted due to Jesus' gift of grace, and thus, God provides them eternal life.[767]

Throughout this entire passage, starting with verse twelve, Paul accentuates the fact that "all sinned" through Adam's sin; and despite this continuous repetition Garrett states that Paul in Romans 5:12-19 does not "settle indisputably for his day and for all

---

[765]Rom 5:12-19—12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ abound to the many. 16 The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in the condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification. 17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. 18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. 19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so throu the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

[766]Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, 856.

[767]Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, 560.

time . . . how the sin of individual human beings is related to . . . vis-à-vis the sin of Adam and Eve."[768] Whether relating to Christians or non-Christians, though, this passage undoubtedly teaches that all people share in the "common experience" of inheriting Adam's sin and guilt.[769] Paul further expounds upon humanity's guilt in verses thirteen and fourteen. He explains that during the Law's absence, man's "sin" remains; because even though humans prior to Moses' era did not break God's specific commands like Adam did, death still befalls them due to their inherited sinful nature. Regarding this Grudem writes, "The fact that they died is very good proof that God counted people guilty on the basis of Adam's sin."[770] Continuing, then, to verse fifteen, just as the Apostle Paul increases awareness that Christ's one righteous act brings universal life, in the same way he also solidifies the sobering reality that Adam's one "transgression" brings universal death.[771]

Concerning the next two verses, Frame writes: "In verse 16, then, we are condemned for the sin of the one man. In verse 17, death came through the one man."[772] In the final two verses of Romans 5:12-19, the Apostle Paul fully discloses the horrendous plight people are in unless they accept Jesus Christ's gift of eternal life. In verses eighteen and nineteen the Apostle Paul describes how Adam's "disobedience" denigrates human nature, converting all men into "sinners". Consequently, God indicts

---

[768]Ibid., 562.

[769]Conyers, *A Basic Christian Theology*, 83.

[770]Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, 213.

[771]Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, 857.

[772]Ibid.

all men as guilty, condemning them to die unless they accept Christ's righteous gift. Pertaining to the Apostle Paul's use of "sinners" in verse nineteen, Grudem writes:

> When Adam sinned, God thought of all who would descend from Adam as sinners. Though we did not yet exist, God, looking into the future and knowing that we would exist, began thinking of us as those who were guilty like Adam.[773]

Indeed, Romans 5:12-19, as Frame previously testifies, "clearly" depicts humanity as guilty due to Adam's sin. Nonetheless, the exact step-by-step formula by which Adam's sin pollutes human nature, making all men "sinners", as Garrett states previously, remains unknown. It is not surprising, then, that many Christian theologians voice their objections to the doctrine of inherited sin. Pannenberg, writing about the confusion that the subject of inherited sin creates, states: "No other theme in Christian anthropology has been so obscured for us today than that of sin and our approach to it."[774] Furthermore, Peters lists some questions Christian scholars raise against the "idea" of inherited sin. Putting it simply, Peters writes, theologians deem this doctrine "unfair", asking questions such as:

> Why should I be blamed for something Adam and Eve did? Just because Adam and Eve could not resist the temptation to eat the forbidden fruit, is it just for God to punish me and everyone else in my generation?[775]

Yarnold also writes about the opposition that the doctrine of inherited sin receives from Christians. In response, Yarnold categorizes their opposition into four major "objections." The first objection Yarnold titles the "Moral Objection", and it represents those who protest man's condemnation on account of Adam's sin, alleging that

---

[773]Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, 213.

[774]Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 231.

[775]Peters, *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society*, 28.

inherited sin is immoral. In that Adam and Eve commit sin, and not the human race, the Moral Objection states that God "blaming" the "innocent" is therefore morally wrong.[776] The next objection, the "Physical Objection", uses scientific data to disprove the concept of inherited sin. The Physical Objection claims that it is scientifically impossible for a married couple's "moral" problem to "physically" or "psychologically" corrupt their child through procreation.[777] Augustine, for example, argues that parents pass their sinful nature to their child as a result of the evil passions that lead to sexual intercourse.[778] Those holding to the Physical Objection decree this type of thinking medically unsound.

The third objection, the "Biological Objection", rejects "monogenism", or the biblical belief that mankind proceeds from one set of parents. The Biological Objection instead advocates "monophyletic polygenism . . . maintaining that the whole human race throughout the world evolved from a single population in one region."[779] Fourthly, the "Epistemological Objection" doubts the author of Genesis' credibility. Meaning, epistemologically, this objection inserts doubt into the "Yahwist's" ability to accurately *know* about what occurs between Adam, Eve, the serpent, and God.[780]

In addition to Yarnold disclosing the four major objections to the doctrine of inherited sin across Christian history, Smith's work further records the diverse views on

---

[776]Edward Yarnold, *The Theology of Original Sin* (Notre Dame, IN: Fides Publishers, 1971), 25-26.

[777]Ibid., 27-28.

[778]Augustine, *On Grace and Original Sin*, 69-73.

[779]Yarnold, *The Theology of Original Sin*, 29-30.

[780]Ibid., 31-32.

inherited sin from the time of Justin Martyr (d. 165) to Millard Erickson (b. 1932).[781] Moreover, Smith writes that it is possible that Tertullian (d. 220) is the first to develop the "Western interpretation of the Fall" and the "doctrine of heredity sinfulness"; but that it is Augustine (d. 430) who actually "synthesized" past theological work to produce the first elementary "theology of sin".[782] This means that for four centuries after Christ's death the doctrine of inherited sin remains undeveloped, and then in the following fifteen centuries of church history it yields countless renditions. Garrett logs some of these dissimilar theological renditions under the title "Theories as to the Relation of the Sin of Adam and Eve to Our Sin". Some of them Garret lists are as follows: "Theory of Realism", "Covenantal Theory", "Theory of Mediate Imputation through Depravity", "Theory of a Bad Example", "Theory of Social as well as Biological Transmission of Evil", "Theory of Uncondemnable Depravity", etc.[783]

Systematic theology grounds the belief that God charges humanity as guilty on account of Adam's sin. The most thorough biblical presentation of the doctrine of inherited sin comes from Romans 5:12-19. This pericope clearly illustrates how Adam's one transgression results in mankind's sinfulness; and hence, is worthy of God's condemnation. What theologians are uncertain of, however, is the exact method by which God imputes Adam's sin to mankind. The multiple objections to the idea of

---

[781]David L. Smith, *With Willful Intent: A Theology of Sin* (Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint, 1994), 17-152.

[782]Ibid., 32.

[783]Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, 562-67.

inherited sin, its prolonged historical development, and diverse theories serve as testimony to the perplexing nature of this doctrine.

Hiebert's second step to building a missional methodology requires gleaning from systematic theology to learn what Christianity teaches about man's nature. First and foremost, systematic theologians stress that Christians must not "ignore the basic nobility of man", because God creates man good: in his image. Scholars further teach that OT and NT evidence demonstrates that man's immaterial nature subsists within his soul, spirit, mind, heart, flesh, bowels, etc. Therefore, whenever the Scriptures mention one of these terms, it refers to man's single and incorporeal substance. In addition, when theologians instruct about sin, they focus on sin's internal essence. Even in the Ten Commandments God teaches his people that sin originates from man's evil desires. Fourthly, systematic theology attests to humanity's guilt due to Adam's sin. The Apostle Paul in Romans 5:12-19 leaves no doubt that Adam's transgression causes God's condemnation against mankind. Nonetheless, uncertainty marks church history with regards to the precise way in which God imputes Adam's sin to the entire human race.

3rd Step: Missiology

Completing Hiebert's missional methodology requires that the writer accomplish the third step: missiology. This dissertation's previous three chapters examine *fiṭrah* and *nafs* from Islam's texts and prominent scholars. This data reveals that man's nature in Islam does not purely contain good tendencies, but evil inclinations as well. Thus, this research demonstrating that man's nature in Islam is dual satisfies Hiebert's first step of phenomenology. Hiebert's second step, ontology, directs the writer to acquire information about what Christianity says about man's nature from systematic

theologians. Ontology's data informs that God's image in man is good, that many biblical terms represent man's one immaterial nature, that sin's essence is foremost internal, and that God considers mankind guilty as the result of Adam's trespass.

Hiebert's final step in constructing a missional methodology integrates the data from phenomenology with ontology's. By assimilating these two steps the writer endeavors to produce a plan that provides biblical principles which help Christians communicate man's sinful nature within Muslims' qur'anic mindset. Hiebert adds that this third step needs to also:

> help the church and the world to move from where they are to where God wants them to be . . . we cannot expect people simply to abandon their old ways and adopt new ones. They can move from where they are only by an ongoing process of transformation.[784]

Consequently, the writer's desire is to also come alongside the body of Christ and respectfully offer a fresh missiological solution to the presiding missiological dilemma occurring between Muslims and Christians regarding man's nature since Islam's advent.

The writer's "course of action in the specific case at hand",[785] then, encourages Christians to apply six biblical principles when attempting to persuade Muslims that man's nature is sinful. Prior to doing this the writer reminds the reader that these are missiological *principles*, not dogmatic steps. Meaning, the writer does not list them in order of importance, nor does he expect Christians to follow their listed sequence. These missiological principles are actually fluid; the Christian applies them in his conversations with Muslims as the situation dictates. The six biblical principles are: 1) avoid inherited sin; 2) emphasize the fall's effects; 3) emphasize sin's internal essence, 4) emphasize

---

[784]Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts*, 50.

man's internal struggle, 5) emphasize the new heart, and 6) emphasize man's noble purpose.

Avoid inherited sin. There are three reasons why Christians should avoid speaking about the doctrine of inherited sin with Muslims when conversing about man's sinful nature.

First of all, Christians must heed Chapman's advice and desist from "fighting the old battles all over again".[786] As this dissertation's second chapter's verifies, Islam teaches unequivocally that God creates every person *good* due to *fiṭrah*. Furthermore, four qur'anic verses (pg. 236) instruct Muslims that salvation depends on man's works alone. No one "can bear the burden of another" (Sūrat al-Najm: 38) and save people from their sins. Obviously, this chapter's subsection titled "Humanity's Guilt" (pgs. 272-77) informs that Christianity declares the direct opposite on both accounts. On one hand, all men are sinners due to Adam's transgression; and on the other, Jesus' one gracious act provides eternal life to all who accept his gift. However, Kateregga and Shenk's excerpt (pgs. 237-44) registers the standard Muslim-Christian stalemate in the dialogue about their respective Adam and Eve narratives. Thus, Christians cannot expect their Muslim friends to instantly accept their proclamation of the doctrine of inherited sin. They must stop "fighting the old battles all over again" and find other ways to effectively communicate that man's nature is sinful.

---

[785]Ibid.

[786]Woodberry, *Muslims & Christians on the Emmaus Road*, 118.

Second of all, one of the Christian's greatest responsibilities in evangelism is to incarnate the Gospel message. Kraft, as a result, urges his readers to become "receptor-oriented" communicators.[787] A "self-centered" communicator "impresses" himself and others while sharing the Gospel; and a "message-centered" communicator hones in on using the Gospel's "precise terminology". A "receptor-oriented" communicator, though,

> is careful to bend every effort to meet his receptors where they are. He will choose topics that relate directly to the felt needs of the receptors, he will choose methods of presentation that are appealing to them, he will use language that is maximally intelligible to them.[788]

The missiological reality shows that the doctrine of inherited sin inhibits Muslims from "maximally" comprehending their grave sinful condition, distancing them from recognizing the need for a Savior. Therefore, Christians must fulfill what Hesselgrave calls the "missionary task" of "communication"[789] which, in this case, obliges them to persuade Muslims that they are sinful *without* mentioning inherited sin.

The next reason Christians should avoid using inherited as evidence for mankind's sinful nature concerns ranking the "receptor's" receptivity to the Gospel message. Engel names it "The Spiritual-Decision Process" which graphs the level of Gospel communication that the Christian adopts depending on the "receptor's" approachability.[790] Engel's scale ranges between a negative and a positive eight.

---

[787]Charles H. Kraft, *Communicating Jesus' Way* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999), 19-21.

[788]Ibid., 20.

[789]David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1991), 25.

[790]James F. Engel and Hugo Wilbert Norton, *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?: A Communication Strategy for the Church and World Evangelization* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan

Negative eight represents an unbeliever who has a basic "awareness" of God but no "effective knowledge of the Gospel". Positive eight, however, characterizes a mature reproducing disciple of Jesus Christ who has an excelled understanding of God and the Gospel.[791] Where, though, do Muslims rank on Engel's scale? Indeed, Muslims recognize Allah's existence, but the qur'anic Jesus is merely a prophet who did not die on the cross for man's sins.[792]

Consequently, the writer ranks Muslims a negative eight on Engel's scale due to their ineffective understanding about Jesus. The writer would give Muslims a negative ten if he could, because in reality their knowledge about Jesus is not simply ineffective, but *anti*-Gospel. The writer's off-the-chart negative rating for Muslims is significant to remember because Engel invents this scale to help Christians calculate how to modify their Gospel communication so that the "receptor" can begin slowly moving up the scale. Engel writes:

> The responsibility of the Christian communicator is to approach people where they are in terms of their spiritual position and, through an appropriate . . . message . . . cause them to progress in their decision process toward initial commitment and subsequent growth. The goal, in short, is to bring about demonstrable and measurable change in people with respect to their response to the gospel.[793]

Parshall phrases the "goal" of Engel's scale more forthrightly, and with a Muslim "receptor" in mind. Parshall challenges Western Christians to stop anticipating Muslims having the same aptitude to comprehend Gospel-truths as compared to those

---

Publishins House, 1975), 44-45.

[791]Ibid., 45.

[792]I. A. Ibrahim, *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam*, 2nd ed. (Houston, TX: Darussalam, 1997), 57-58.

[793]Engel and Norton, *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?*, 46-47.

from a Judeo-Christian background. Parshall writes, "My plea is for a limited, basic presentation of the gospel in the initial instance."[794] Parshall's chief concern is for Christians to jettison the thinking that when they are sharing the Gospel with Muslims *for the first time* that they must "cram" as much "knowledge about the technical details of Christianity" as possible.[795] Engel and Parshall, then, support Christians offering an "initial" exposition about man's sinful nature which strays from discoursing with Muslims about the intricacies of the doctrine of inherited sin. Instead, Christians must be "extremely practical" in their Muslim evangelism and "focus on present realities rather than on dreamy ideals."[796] For case in point, Pannenberg, Yarnold, Smith, and Garrett record (pgs. 275-77) Christianity's historical struggle over understanding how precisely mankind becomes sinful due to Adam's sin in the garden. However, why is it when most Christians tell Muslims that they are sinful due to Adam's sin, they expect them to instantaneously grasp the inherited sin concept, unlike the church fathers. Therefore, because Muslims' Gospel-receptivity ranking exceeds Engel's negative scale, Christians should *initially* avoid discussion about mankind's sinfulness on the basis of Adam's sin.

Emphasize the fall's effects. Avoiding discussion about inherited sin with Muslims does not mean that Christians downplay Adam's atrocious sin in the garden. It does mean, though, that Christians stop "fighting the old battles all over again" with Muslims by finding other ways to effectively communicate man's sinful nature. This

---

[794]Parshall, *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism*, 87.

[795]Ibid.

[796]Ibid., 97.

dissertation's research reveals that the Commanding Soul's innate evil (pgs. 130-49) *causes* man to commit outward wicked behavior. Christians, then, striving to "expose . . . [Muslims] to the word of God",[797] should abstain from talking about inherited sin, and instead concentrate on the heinous *effects* of Adam's disobedience. Specifically, the last three Commanding Soul examples from this dissertation's third chapter (pgs. 142-49) identify Cain, Jacob's sons, and the Israelites committing external reprehensible deeds due to their soul's inner evil. This, of course, runs counter to what Islamic scholars contend about the Core *ḥadīth* (pgs. 54-62), i.e. that man's evil deeds are solely products of social *external* influences.[798]

Contrary to what Islam teaches about the Core *ḥadīth*, though, immediately following Adam's transgression the Qur'an states clearly (Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30) that Cain's soul *causes* him to murder his brother Able (pgs. 147-49). It is also the Commanding Soul (Sūrat Yūsuf: 17-18) that Jacob says *causes* his sons to lie to him regarding Joseph's death (pgs. 142-45). Again, the Commanding Soul is to blame when the Qur'an states that Sāmirī's soul (Sūrat Ṭaha: 95-96) *causes* him to concoct a vision which ends up leading the Israelites into idol worship (pgs. 145-47). In short, these three Commanding Soul passages provide Christians with a qur'anic framework that communicates an important biblical principle to Muslims: man's sinful nature causes him to commit outward evil deeds.

---

[797]Fouad Elias Accad, *Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1997), 74.

[798]'Abd al-'Āṭī, *Islam in Focus*, 32.

Smith's work titled *Willful Intent: A Theology of Sin*, dedicates four chapters[799] methodically documenting the fall's horrendous repercussions upon the human race. In fact, Smith highlights the biblical narratives for Cain's murder, Jacob's sons' lie, and the Israelites' idolatry as examples of the fall's evil effects upon mankind.[800] About Cain's murdering Able, Moucarry writes:

> It did not take long before the consequences of Adam's sin on his descendants were tragically illustrated: Cain, Adam's son, killed his own brother. The story of this gratuitous murder, recorded in both the Bible (Gen. 4:1-16; cf. Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12-13) and the Qur'an (5:30-34), reveals that Adam's disobedience had far-reaching implications for his offspring. Thus sin embraces all human beings.[801]

Therefore, the writer offers the following scripture selections to serve as a basic *model* for Christians to emulate in their *own* dialogue with Muslims. Also, after Christians initiate their Muslim-Christian dialogue by sharing these types of Bible passages, the writer encourages discussing the above Commanding Soul examples. Lastly, Christians must not forget the Muslims' negative eight Engel scale ranking. Conversations about man's sinful nature need to remain simple and uncomplicated. Keep to the missiological principle: immediately following Adam's sin, man's sinful nature produces outward evil deeds. The following passages are merely listed to *model* the types of scriptures Christians can share with Muslims that represent this missiological principle:

---

[799]Smith, *With Willful Intent: A Theology of Sin*, 279, 310.

[800]Ibid., 163-75.

[801]Chawkat Moucarry, *The Search for Forgiveness: Pardon and Punishment in Islam and Christianity* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 90.

- Gen 4:1-8—Read the whole passage but focus on verse seven. Scholars supply a sundry of reasons why God rejects Cain's offering and accepts Able's.[802] Ultimately, God refuses Cain's "sacrifice" because he fails to offer it "in faith".[803] When God accepts Able's offering, though, Cain's "sin" (חַטָּאָה) "desires" (תְּשׁוּקָה) to kill his older brother. The Scriptures depict Cain's innate evil as "a demon crouching like a wild beast" inciting him to murder Able.[804] Ask the Muslim questions relating to Cain's "sin" and its evil "desire" trying to "master him".
- Gen 6:1-13[805]—This passage demonstrates the human race's proclivity towards sin and "violence."[806] Help the Muslim connect the internal-to-external sin concept from verses five and eleven: "every intent [וְכָל־יֵצֶר] of his heart [לֵב] was only evil [רַק רַע] continually [כָּל־הַיּוֹם]". Men's hearts (except Noah and his family) devise evil all of the time,[807] and because of this, humans commit "violence". Ask the Muslim what causes mankind to do evil things?
- Gen 37:18-36—Stress that Jacob's sons' scheming to murder Joseph mirrors Cain's evil desire to kill Able.[808] Focus first on the brothers' lying to Jacob about Joseph's death. Ask the Muslim what causes the brothers to devise such a "calloused" act.[809] Link the brothers' deceit to their envious "scheming" (נָכַל) which occurs in their inner "minds".[810] Ask the Muslim where the brothers' "plotting" and lying comes from.
- Exod 32:1-10—Moses delays from coming down Mt. Sinai. "Rebellious" insurrection occurs "against" Moses' leadership.[811] Aaron succumbs to the

---

[802]Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, ed. David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 104.

[803]Joseph S. Exell and Thomas H. Leale, *Genesis*, The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974, reprint, 2nd), 83.

[804]Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 106.

[805]The Muslim might be familiar with Sūrat Nūḥ which provides a brief qur'anic account of the flood. God in the qur'anic Flood account sends heavy "rain" upon the earth due to man's "sins" and "arrogance".

[806]Exell and Leale, *Genesis*, 127.

[807]Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 144.

[808]Exell and Leale, *Genesis*, 628.

[809]Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, ed. David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 2, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1994), 354.

[810]Ibid., 353.

[811]John I. Durham, *Exodus*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 3 (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 419.

> Israelites' demand for another god to worship in Moses' absence. Aaron and the people's "crime" of idolatry results in them breaking God's second commandment (Exod 20:4).[812] Focus on the Israelites' "rebellion" against God and Moses which leads to the people's idolatry. Ask the Muslim where "rebellion" and "idolatry" come from.

Three Commanding Soul passages explicitly illustrate that man commits evil deeds as the result of innate evil tendencies. Following Adam's sin, the entire Bible records the fall's evil effects on mankind. This biblical principle helps Christians know what types of scriptures to select when sharing about man's sinful nature with Muslims.

Emphasize sin's internal essence. The Commanding Soul and its first two examples disclose a vital point for Muslims and Christians to talk about regarding man's human nature. The Qur'an teaches (Sūrat Yūsuf: 53) that the Commanding Soul (pgs. 130-34) aggressively spurs each human being to commit evil. The Commanding Soul's first example (Sūrat Qāf: 16) further instructs that man's soul constantly "whispers" evil "suggestions" inside of him (pgs. 134-38). The second Commanding Soul example (Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 35-41) reveals that man's soul serves as *the* source for his "lower" or evil desires (pgs. 138-42). Islam teaches that God creates all men good according to *fiṭrah* (Sūrat al-Rūm: 30), and the Core *ḥadīth* instructs that the evil which man commits after he is born results from outward societal influences, e.g. a parent's instruction. The above Commanding Soul verses, however, pronounce another side to man's nature in Islam; and thus, furnish Christians with another biblical principle that they can apply in their "receptor-oriented" Muslim-Christian dialogue about man's sinful nature.

---

[812]Joseph S. Exell, *Exodus*, The Preacher's Holiletic Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974, reprint, 2nd), 502.

Frame's threefold definition outlining God's standard for "human righteousness" (pgs. 268-69) effectively explains that sin is an internal, and not external, human condition. Furthermore, the Bible uses numerous terms describing the incorporeal repository of man's nature. For example, OT and NT words such as soul, spirit, heart, flesh, bowels, and mind corporately designate man's *single* internal substance (pgs. 264-68). Scriptures displaying man's inner substance prompting humans towards evil, then, satisfy this missiological principle. The writer exhorts Christians to diligently search the Scriptures for verses emphasizing sin's internal essence. The following examples simply provide a model for Christians to follow in their Muslim-Christian dialogue. Once again, it is critical that Christians present this biblical principle to their first-time Muslim "receptors" in straightforward fashion. In addition, after starting with scriptures such as these, Christians are free to discuss the above Commanding Soul verses.

- Exod 20:17—This tenth commandment "implicitly" incriminates man's inner "desire" to harm his "neighbor" as a sin.[813] The term "covet" (חָמַד) in this verse's context means to "incline towards, long for, lust over"; and basically forms the fundamental component that leads man to break the previous nine imperatives.[814] Stress with the Muslim that "coveting" someone else's property equals "evil-thinking" which comes from man's inner being.[815]
- Jer 17:9—This verse's reference to the "heart" (לֵב) represents "deceitful, sinful humanity".[816] Man's heart is "deceitful" (עָקֹב) and "sick" (אָנַשׁ); therefore, he needs God to give him a "new heart".[817] Stress that man cannot trust his "heart"

---

[813]Owen. ed Collins, *The Definitive Bible Commentary* (London: Harper Collins, 1999), 70.

[814]Durham, *Exodus*, 297-98.

[815]Exell, *Exodus*, 362.

[816]Peter C. Craigie, Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Jr. Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1-25*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 26, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991), 227.

[817]W. Harvey Jellie, *Jeremiah*, The Preacher's Holmiletic Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974, reprint, 2nd), 374-75.

unless God renews him. Moreover, man cannot hide the treachery living inside of him because God sees its constant deceit.[818] Ask the Muslim what "sicknesses" man's heart contains.

- Prov 6:16-18—God "hates" what is "in ourselves".[819] In fact, God considers "shedding innocent blood" on par with "a heart that devises wicked plans (מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָוֶן)". Stress with the Muslim that God symbolizes man's inner nature by referring to it as "organs of the body".[820] Ask the Muslim what "wicked plans" issue forth from man's heart.
- Matt 15:15-20—Jesus exposes the Pharisees' hypocrisy when they criticize his disciples for eating bread with unwashed hands. Addressing these Jewish leaders, Jesus declares: "It is not what enters the mouth that defiles" a man, but rather the "evil thoughts" (διαλογισμοὶ πονηροί) inside his heart. Stress that the "source" of "all sorts of evil deeds" resides in the "heart" (καρδία).[821] Talk with the Muslim about the evil deeds Jesus lists and inquire into what types of evil thoughts produce each one.
- Jas 1:13-15—God "tries and proves" men's faith for their strengthening.[822] God does not, however, "tempt" man to sin. On the contrary, each person's "lust" (ἐπιθυμία) or "evil desire" entices him. When man surrenders to his lust, "death" occurs. This produces a life marked by unholy "living" and outside of God's will. Stress that man's "evil desire" is the "mother of all sin".[823] Ask the Muslim if he tends to blame other things for his sin, rather than his own "lust".

The Qur'an teaches that the Commanding Soul contains the source of man's "evil desires." Jesus teaches that sin's essence is foremost internal, originating from within man's heart. Christians should exercise this missiological principle so that Muslims can better understand that their evil desires cause their nature to be sinful.

---

[818]Collins, *The Definitive Bible Commentary*, 659.

[819]Ibid., 537.

[820]Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 22, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 38.

[821]Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (England; Grand Rapids, MI: Wiliam B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 398.

[822]Robert Tuck, *On the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle: James*, The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974), 539.

[823]Ralph P. Martin, *James*, ed. David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 48, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), 36-39.

Emphasize man's internal struggle. The Qur'an teaches that the soul operates in three different modes depending on its spiritual state. The Tranquil Soul (Sūrat al-Fajr: 27-30) actively obeys God, and thus, enjoys Allah's peace (pgs. 124-27). Whenever man surrenders to the Commanding Soul's evil desires, however, the Blaming Soul (Sūrat al-Qiyāmah: 2) reprimands him (pgs. 127-29). Man's *fiṭrah*, due to its natural inclination towards *tawḥīd*, also battles against the Commanding Soul's negative tendencies. In addition, according to Ghazālī (pgs. 153-54) and Ibn Qayyim (pgs. 172-73), the Blaming Soul incessantly struggles against the Commanding Soul's evil. Therefore, the Islamic view of the soul imparts yet another missiological principle that Christians can discuss with Muslims concerning man's sinful nature. This missiological principle seeks to draw attention to the inner struggle Muslims encounter as they labor to follow the Qur'an's guidance. Kateregga writes that the only way Muslims can enter *jannah*, or go to heaven, is "by obeying the Law of God."[824] While adhering to the Law's daily stipulations, though, Muslims withstand the Commanding Soul's resistance and the Blaming Soul's rebuke.

The Scriptures also attest to this tension that the Law rouses as the Jews observe God's commandments. Most Christian theologians concur that the Apostle Paul's seventh chapter most vividly personifies this personal war between the Law's goodness and human sinfulness. Yarnold, regarding this struggle, states that the Apostle Paul in Romans 7:14-25 explicitly addresses this matter. Yarnold writes:

> There exists, and not only among Christians, a conviction that man is flawed even before he himself has chosen to sin; he belongs to a race that carries a collective guilt, has suffered a collective

---

[824]Kateregga and Shenk, *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*, 44.

> perversion, a fall from the moral integrity that is both his due and duty, so that in his individual experience he is constantly aware of a force that pulls him down from his ideals, a short-fall between his higher, real self, and the imperfect way in which he manages to express that real self when it comes to putting ideals into practice.[825]

Muslims and Christians, from their respective theological perspectives, then, experience an opposing inner "force" when striving to live according to the Law. Christians, as a result, should take full advantage of this missiological principle that the Apostle Paul exposits in Romans 7:14-25.[826] For not only does this Pauline passage *expose* the Muslim's religious quandary, but it also *leads* him to the solution. Due to the significant role that this biblical principle can play in Muslims' lives, the writer offers verse-by-verse commentary on Romans 7:14-25 to help Christians in their Muslim-Christian dialogue:

- Rom 7:14-25 Overview—This passage's general theme denotes man's inability to live by the Law without "escaping its condemnation." Paul's overall objective targets Christ, but his argumentation involves personifying the defiant "energy" of inherited sin that is preventing him from obeying God's Law.[827]
    - 14: the Law originates in God who is Spirit, but Paul's "flesh" (from σάρξ), or inner nature, is sinful.[828] Stress that God's Law is good.
    - 15: this verse details Paul trying to live in the Spirit with an opposing sinful nature. Knowing the Law intellectually and actually "knowing" (γινώσκω) it experientially are two different realities.[829] Ask the Muslim if he desires to obey God's Law.
    - 16: if Paul's spiritual goal aims to obey God's Law but he does not do it, then logically, God's Law, which is good, is not to blame. Ask the Muslim who is to blame for not obeying God's Law.

---

[825]Yarnold, *The Theology of Original Sin*, 23.

[826]1 Pet 2:11 and Jas 4:1-3 are also excellent model passages demonstrating man's evil desires warring against the "soul", but not against God's Law.

[827]W. E. Vine, *The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine*, vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 376.

[828]James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 38, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 387.

[829]Vine, *The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine*, 377.

- 17: Paul's "I" refers to the "inner man" which resists doing good, or the Law.[830] Focus on man's inner negative tendencies.
- 18-20: Even though Paul wants to do good, his sinful "flesh" (σάρξ) resists. These verses denote man's inner struggle between a "good desire and failure to act" due to a sinful nature.[831] Discuss practical examples of this daily struggle.
- 21-23: Paul contrasts two laws living in his body. The Law of God, or the "law of the mind", "reinforces" Paul's spiritual desire to do good. Nonethess, the "law of sin" awakes as a result, keeping him in bondage from the "doing".[832] Stress the flesh's, or sinful nature's, power to keep man from obeying God's Law.
- 24: Paul's inner struggle makes him feel "miserable". Paul cries out to God for help. The Spirit in Paul longs for its final redemption when Christ returns to set him free from the "body of death", or his nagging sinful nature.[833] Ask the Muslim if he wants God's help to overcome the constant evil tendencies keeping him from obeying God's Law. Ask him if he knows *who* can help him.
- 25: The one who delivers Paul from his "miserable" bondage is Jesus Christ. Before Christ returns, though, Paul's "divided I" continues: the first "I" referring to his mind, "united with Christ in his death", and the second "I" representing his flesh, "not yet united with Christ in his resurrection".[834]

Islamic theology concerning the soul teaches that the Blaming Soul and the Commanding Soul struggle against each other as man attempts to obey God's Law. This information helps build a missiological principle that guides Muslims to the understanding that the failure to obey God's Law results from their opposing sinful nature. Christians should read through Romans 7:14-25 with Muslims using a basic

---

[830]Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 390.

[831]Vine, *The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine*, 377-78.

[832]Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 392-96.

[833]Vine, *The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine*, 378.

[834]Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 411.

question-answer format. After reviewing this Pauline passage, Muslims should better comprehend their inner struggle against sin and know that Jesus Christ is the solution.

Emphasize the new heart. Renown Islamic scholar Ghazālī writes that man's immaterial substance—the soul, spirit, and intellect—reside within the *heart* (pgs. 151-53). Ghazālī's heart analogy is similar to Rāzī's concept of man's incorporeal nature. In Rāzī's viewpoint, the soul, intellect, spirit, and heart comprise man's Rational Soul (pg. 165). Christian theology teaches that the soul, spirit, flesh, heart, mind, and bowels (pgs. 266-68) corporately refer to man's single immaterial substance. However, it is the *heart* in both the Old and New Testaments that refers to the "center of man's thought and will" (pg. 266).[835] Furthermore, the second missiological principle informs that the heart is "sick" (Jer 17:9), "devises wicked plans" (Prov 6:18), and the source of man's evil deeds (Matt 15:19). Fortunately, God prescribes the perfect anecdote for man's cancerous heart condition. God's prognosis does not entail periodic treatment, but rather a radically intrusive surgical operation: a "heart transplant".[836] The fact that the Commanding Soul also plagues man's nature in Islam generates the next missiological principle.

This missiological principle empowers every Law-abiding Muslim with the power to overcome his evil desires so that he may fulfill God's will. This principle's theme centers on God giving man a new nature through the Holy Spirit, also known as the New Covenant. The writer suggests model passages such as these to *preempt* the new

---

[835]Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, 500-01, 504-05.

[836]Shumack, *The Wisdom of Islam*, 78.

heart concept. Maintaining basic communication in question-answer format with these types of introductory passages is fundamental to the Christian's presentation.

- John 3:1-10—The religious leader Nicodemus wants to talk to Jesus but comes "by night", most likely "due to fear".[837] Nicodemus admits Jesus comes from God but merely calls him a "teacher" because he is "afraid at committing himself too far."[838] Despite Nicodemus being a leading Pharisee, Jesus tells him that he is not right with God and cannot enter God's kingdom unless he is "born from above". Nicodemus confuses Jesus' words, thinking he implies returning to his mother's womb. Jesus defines that "born again" means "born of water and the Spirit". Flesh gives birth to flesh, Spirit gives birth to Spirit. Flesh refers to man's "corrupted, depraved condition";[839] and Spirit to the "power of the God of heaven at work in the world".[840] Jesus is amazed that a Jewish leader does not know what "born of water and the Spirit" means. Ask the Muslim if he knows what these two terms mean.
- Rom 8:3a—The Law is weak in "the flesh" not because it lacks perfection, but rather due to its "inability" to enable man's obedience. Man's "flesh", or nature, is "weak" as the result of its sinful condition.[841] Ask the Muslim what it would take for man to be able to successfully obey God's Law.

After preempting this missiological principle with Muslims from verses such as these, turn to Ezekiel 36:25-27 and read it together. This passage explains Jesus' "water and of the Spirit" terminology,[842] and also answers *how* God fixes the Law's weakness.[843]

---

[837]George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, 2nd ed., vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 47.

[838]Collins, *The Definitive Bible Commentary*, 1087.

[839]Ibid.

[840]Beasley-Murray, *John*, 49.

[841]James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 38 (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988), 419-20.

[842]George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, 2nd ed., vol. 36 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 49.

[843]Another effective passage demonstrating God replacing man's old heart with a new one is

- Ezek 36:25-27—The water represents God's "forgiveness and spiritual cleansing" of man's "filthiness" and "idols", i.e. external sins. God's Spirit, though, gives man a "new heart", or new nature, which supplies him with a new "will". This new "will" is "an expression" of the Holy Spirit who strengthens man to "observe" God's commandments.[844] Ask the Muslim if he wants a new heart. Ask the Muslim if he wants to be "born from above". Ask the Muslim if he knows how to receive the Spirit's power so that he can obey God's Law.

If Muslims show interest in these passages and questions, the Christian should then return with them to John 3 and/or Romans 8 to study John 3:11-17 and/or Romans 8:1-17 with them.

Both Islamic and Christian theologies declare that man's nature, or heart, inclines to evil. This missiological principle helps Muslims understand God's solution for their serious heart condition. The preemptive passages—John 3:1-10 and Rom 8:3a—are model-verses which guide Christians in knowing how to select other scriptures which lead to the New Covenant found in Ezekiel 36:25-27.

Emphasize man's noble purpose. Ibn Taymiyyah champions (pgs. 94-109) what Mohamed names the Positive View. The Positive View declares that due to *fiṭrah* man's nature is wholly good *and* actively pursues God (pgs. 184-85). Mohamed's Positive View defends man's goodness with a teleological emphasis while linking *fiṭrah* to man's responsibility in this world to: live by faith in God (Core *ḥadīth*), believe in God's oneness (Sūrat al-Rūm: 30), submit to God (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172), and fulfill his vicegerent role (Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72). Kateregga explains that man's vicegerent role

---

Jer 31:31-34.

[844]Leslie C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 29, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 179.

charges human beings with the task of worshiping Allah and caring for the earth (pgs. 237-38). Man's *fiṭrah*, then, emboldens Muslims to laud man's nobility. Unfortunately, Christianity's doctrine of inherited sin can deeply offend Muslims. Holding to the belief that God creates corrupt vicegerents, unable to submit to his will, simply affronts Muslims' religious ideology.[845] This missiological principle determines to honor Islam's dignified view of man by reminding Christians to emphasize with Muslims man's noble purpose in the Scriptures. Christians who share lopsided Gospel presentations with Muslims that disproportionately feature man's sinful depravity prove a disservice to God's image in man. It is not that Christians should "minimize the gravity of . . . sin", but also that they should not "avoid the basic nobility of man . . . having been created in the image of God".[846]

A balanced Gospel presentation about the nature of man intentionally includes communicating the noble purpose man receives from God. In that Muslims "reject the idea that man is made in the image and likeness of God",[847] the writer encourages for Christians in this missiological principle to share scriptures which instead *explain* what "made in his image" means. Although "made in his image" enjoys multiple connotations (pgs. 259-64), the writer supports that Christians follow Frame's threefold "lordship" interpretation: kingly, prophetic, and priestly. These three "lordship" offices highlight the noble purpose God's image gives man to physically rule the earth, verbally proclaim

---

[845]Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, *Islam and Other Faiths*, ed. Ataullah Siddiqui (United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 1998), 84.

[846]Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 89.

[847]Anyabwile, *The Gospel for Muslims*.

his words, and spiritually engage in worship (pgs. 261-62). The following verses help Christians know how to select scriptures exalting God's noble image in man:

- Gen 1:28-31—God gives the "divine purpose of marriage" between man and woman: to be fruitful through procreation. God wants man to have children so that they may "fill the earth" with his image. God makes man "king over nature", appointing him its steward.[848] After creating man, God calls creation "very good". Stress that God blesses marriage and having children. Ask the Muslim why God wants his image to "fill the earth".
- Deut 6:4-9—Man's loftiest role on earth is to "love" the Lord who is one. God creates man to love him with all of his "heart" and then to fervently teach his children the same. Man is to continuously "bind" God's remembrance upon his mind.[849] Stress that God is one. Ask the Muslim what it means to love God with all of his "heart". Ask the Muslim how man should teach his children to love God.
- Ps 8:5-9—"God's role for mankind is that of master within the created universe". The psalmist praises God for blessing man with such a "divine and significant plan."[850] Stress with the Muslim how God creates man to fulfill such a wonderful role on earth with his creation.
- Ps 42:1-2—The psalmist attempts to "convey his spiritual thirst" for the "living God." Just as a tired deer "pants" for water, he longs to "come and appear" before God in worship.[851] Stress with the Muslim that God creates man to spiritually need and worship him.
- John 13:34-35—Jesus' commandment begins a "new order" in that his disciples are tasked to "love one another" according to the measure of his "messianic" love. The world recognizes Christ's followers by their love for one another.[852] Stress that Jesus has the authority to issue a "new commandment". Ultimately, God calls the human race to love each other by the standard of Jesus' love.
- Phil 3:7-8—Paul teaches that man should consider any worldly accolade or human advantage as "rubbish" when compared to the value of knowing God through Jesus Christ. Paul, the high-ranking Jewish leader, gladly suffers the loss of his

---

[848]Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 33-34.

[849]Collins, *The Definitive Bible Commentary*, 162.

[850]Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1-50*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, vol. 19, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983), 109.

[851]Ibid., 326.

[852]George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, ed. Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, 2nd ed., vol. 36 (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 247.

prestige so that he may know God from his relationship with Christ.[853] Stress that God creates man to know him through following Christ's death and resurrection.

Islam views man's nature as purely good due to *fiṭrah*. In addition, Muslim scholars link man's *fiṭrah* to God's noble purpose in creating humans. This missiological principle exhorts Christians to discuss man's nature with Muslims by using a balanced Gospel presentation. The Scriptures teach that God's image in man also gives man a noble purpose; and Christians should select Bible passages to share with Muslims emphasizing what "made in his image" means.

Analysis. Missiologists are responsible for formulating missional methodologies that empower Christians to effectively communicate truth about Christ within a particular "human context." This chapter's first section demonstrates that missiologists can improve contextualizing the fundamental Gospel truth that states man's nature is sinful. Hiebert's missional theology provides the appropriate matrix for the writer to construct a missional methodology. Hiebert's missional methodology contains three steps: phenomenology, ontology, and missiology. The writer's previous chapters' research fulfills phenomenology's requirement for examining a certain issue within a "human context." The data from this dissertation concerning the nature of man in Islam shows that human disposition is dual: good *and* evil.

The second step in building Hiebert's missional methodology, or ontology, requires the writer research what systematic theology instructs about man's nature in Christianity. Ontology biblically grounds missional methodology; and concerning man's

---

[853]Collins, *The Definitive Bible Commentary*, 1345.

nature this second step provides four "universal truths" to guide the third: 1) Christianity teaches that man's "essential" nature is good because God creates man in his image, 2) Christianity teaches that OT and NT terms such as soul, heart, spirit, flesh, mind, and bowels refer to man's singular immaterial substance, 3) Christianity teaches that man's sins are merely external indications of man's internal corruptness, and 4) Christianity teaches that God holds mankind guilty for Adam's sin in the garden.

In the final step, missiology, the writer synthesizes phenomenology and ontology's results for the purpose of producing general biblical principles that help Christians more effectively communicate that man's nature is sinful within Muslims' religious framework. Missiology's results equip Christians with six innovative missiological principles. These missiological principles are not a step-by-step evangelistic process that Christians dogmatically follow. Rather, they are general guidelines intending to aid Christians select suitable scriptures which take into account man's dual nature in Islam: i.e. *fiṭrah's* good and the Commanding Soul's evil. These six biblical principles direct Christians to share scriptures with Muslims that: 1) avoid concepts relating to the doctrine of inherited sin, 2) emphasize man's evil deeds subsequent to Adam's sin, 3) emphasize man's evil deeds originate from evil desires, 4) emphasize man's internal struggle as he strives to obey God's Law, 5) emphasize God giving man a new heart to cure his sinful condition, and 6) emphasize the noble purpose God's image gives man on earth.

Conclusion

The Good News concerning Jesus Christ demands Christians talk with Muslims about man's sinful nature. Muslims, though, do not believe they are sinful due

to God creating them good upon *fiṭrah*. Consequently, Islam deems Christ's redemption inconsequential. Muslims' denial that man's nature is sinful produces a missiological dilemma which can significantly hinder Christians' Gospel presentations from moving forward. Islamic scholars, in particular, show acute disdain for the doctrine of inherited sin due to God creating all people with *fiṭrah*'s intrinsic goodness. Moreover, despite prominent missiologists encouraging Christians to contextualize their Gospel message, when it comes to communicating with Muslims that man's nature is sinful, the missiological reality exhibits them teaching an evangelistic approach resembling Western Christianity's approach throughout church history. Therefore, this evidence advocates that missiologists develop a more contextualized plan which instructs Christians how to discuss man's sinful nature with Muslims.

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide this evidence. Contrary to Mohamed's Positive View of *fiṭrah*, which represents classical and modern Islam, man's nature is not solely good. Instead, due to the Commanding Soul's evil disposition, human nature in Islam proves dual. This research exposing man's dual nature in Islam creates a paradigm shift for Christians in their Muslim evangelism. The writer, as a result, follows Hiebert's missional methodology. Accomplishing Hiebert's three-step process—phenomenology, ontology, and missiology—produces six biblical principles that strategically guide Christians in knowing how to select scriptures which mesh within Islam's dual nature framework: *fiṭrah* and the Commanding Soul. These six missiological principles guide Christians to teach Muslims that man's nature is sinful by: 1) avoiding Bible passages implying inherited sin, 2) emphasizing the fall's evil effects,

3) emphasizing sin's internal essence, 4) emphasizing man's internal struggle, 5) emphasizing the new heart, and 6) emphasizing man's noble purpose.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

There are nearly two billion Muslims residing in the world. Most of them, if not all, believe that their human nature is entirely good on the basis of two chief Islamic texts relating to *fiṭrah*. Christians sharing the Gospel with Muslims, as a result, face an immense challenge. Due to Muslims failing to perceive their critical sinful condition before God, they estimate Christ's redemption as inconsequential. Moreover, the presiding Positive View, which Mohamed alleges represents universal Islam, instructs that *fiṭrah* not only makes human nature good, but also proactively prompts man to obey and love Allah.

Generally speaking, then, since Islam's advent (AD 610), Christians confront a missiological dilemma when sharing their faith with Muslims. An essential truth pertaining to the Gospel states that man is sinful, and hence, needs to trust in Christ's work on the cross in order to receive the Holy Spirit's regeneration. Muslims, however, balk at the former stipulation, not appreciating, consequently, Jesus' gift of salvation.

Although rarely mentioned by Muslims, though, the Qur'an teaches that there exists another side to human nature in man's soul, or *nafs*. In juxtaposition to *fiṭrah's* innate good, the Commanding Soul's (النفس الامّارة بالسوء) evil tendencies incite man to commit wicked deeds. Man's nature in Islam, therefore, is not solely good because of *fiṭrah*, but also innately evil due to the Commanding Soul.

This dissertation's research offers a solution to the missiological dilemma which Christians are experiencing, allowing the writer to build a new missional

methodology which takes the Commanding Soul's ontological evil into consideration. Specifically, Hiebert's three-step missiological process produces six innovative biblical principles that equip Christians to better contextualize Christianity's essential truth that man's nature is sinful.

Chapter 2: "The Nature of *Fiṭrah*"

Islam's scriptures and scholars affirm that human nature is good due to *fiṭrah*. From an etymological standpoint, *fiṭrah's* numerous derivatives in the Qur'an convey Allah creating the heavens, earth, and man from a state of non-existence. In addition, it is the Qur'an that births the single occurrence of *fiṭrah* into the Arabic language. Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 states:

> So set your face towards religion (للدين) as a man pure in faith (حنيفًا)—(adopting) the nature (which is the devising) of Allah (فطرت الله), in which He has created man. There is no altering (the laws of) Allah's creation. That is the right religion (الدين القيم), but most men know not.

The prophet Muḥammad directs this revelation toward Meccan unbelievers, urging them to live out the monotheistic faith which Allah places in them through *fiṭrah*. *Fiṭrah's* essence, according to Muslim commentators, essentially provides the impetus within man leading to the knowledge of God, or *tawḥīd*. If *fiṭrah* refers to *tawḥīd's* essence, then the pre-existential covenant Allah makes with Adam's pre-incarnate progeny (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172) comprises *fiṭrah's* content. Meaning, Allah transcribes pre-incarnate mankind's confession that he alone is Lord into *fiṭrah's* nature. This divine essence that Allah names *fiṭrah*, then, formulates the "right religion" within human beings which they cannot change.

In accordance with Islamic tradition, the Core *ḥadīth* leads the prophet Muḥammad to prophesy Sūrat al-Rūm: 30. Islam's prophet announces in the Core *ḥadīth* that:

> No child is born except on Al-Fitra (Islam) and then his parents make him Jewish, Christian, or Magian, as an animal produces a perfect young animal; do you see any part of its body amputated . . .

Muslim commentators view a more direct connection between *fiṭrah* and Islam from this tradition. For barring the influence of non-Muslim parental upbringing, *fiṭrah* naturally guides children to the Islamic religion. Just as animals are born perfect without deformity, every infant begins life as a member of Allah's religion due to *fiṭrah*. Thus, Islamic theologians teach from the Core *ḥadīth* that only external factors obstruct man's progress toward becoming Muslim.

During the first three centuries, Ash'arī's work, *Maqālāt*, records the early Muslim community associating *fiṭrah* with Allah's qadar, man's divine knowledge, and Muslim and non-Muslim infants' eternal destiny at death. Centuries later Ghazālī defines *fiṭrah's* meaning as the divine substance that Allah infuses into man's "noble intellect" which instinctively leads man to Islam and intuitively generates unacquired thoughts, or First Things (اوّليات). Following Ghazālī, Ibn Taymiyyah champions *fiṭrah's* concept through his ingenious exposition of the Core *ḥadīth*. Ibn Taymiyyah's Core *ḥadīth* exegesis accomplishes two critical theological benchmarks for *fiṭrah* within Islam: 1) it attaches chronology to *fiṭrah*, liberating mainline Muslims to achieve *jannah* through their personal effort, and 2) it designates *fiṭrah* as praiseworthy which naturally prompts man to love and obey Allah. Therefore, *fiṭrah's* essence makes human nature innately good.

Chapter 3: "The Nature of *Nafs*"

Islam's scriptures and scholars affirm that human nature is evil due to the *nafs*. Indeed, Allah creates mankind upon *fiṭrah's* divine essence; but he also intentionally fashions into man's *nafs* a dual capacity. Allah states in Sūrat al-Shams: 7-10:

> By the Soul (نفس), and the proportion and order given to it; and its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right—truly he succeeds that purifies it, and he fails that corrupts it!

Muslim commentators teach that Allah deliberately creates man's soul for committing good and evil. By "proportioning" and "enlightening" the soul, God calibrates it with precise symmetry for man's obedience and rebellion.

The soul's dual capacity complements its three modes of operation: the Tranquil Soul (النفس المطمئنّة), the Blaming Soul (النفس اللوّامة), and the Commanding Soul (النفس الامّارة). Muslim commentators state that the Tranquil Soul (Sūrat al-Fajr: 27-30) pursues peace with God and obeys Allah's revelations. The Blaming Soul (Sūrat al-Qiyāmah: 2) alerts and rebukes man regarding his sinful behavior, attempting to return humans back to Allah's straight path. The Commanding Soul (Sūrat Yūsuf: 53), however, is the Tranquil Soul's antithesis and goads man to commit evil. Yūsuf (Joseph) or King 'Azīz's wife declares in Sūrat Yūsuf: 53:

> Nor do I absolve my own self (of blame): the (human soul) certainly prone to evil (النفس لامّارة بالسوء), unless my Lord do bestow His Mercy: but surely my Lord is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Despite Muslim commentators wavering concerning who speaks in Sūrat Yūsuf: 53, none are confused about the Commanding Soul's evil role within man. As this verse alludes, apart from Allah's divine intervention, the Commanding Soul has the power to cause man to commit evil deeds.

Five other qur'anic passages illustrate the Commanding Soul's destructive influence over man. Sūrat Qāf: 16 informs that the Commanding Soul whispers "dark

suggestions" (توسوس) *inside* of man; and it is only rivalled by Satan who engages in the same abominable activity (Sūrat al-A'rāf: 22), but as an *outside* influence. Furthermore, the Commanding Soul contains the source of man's evil. Hence, unless humans "restrain their souls from lower Desires" (Sūrat al-Nāzi'āt: 35-41), Allah most certainly sends them to Hell. When Jacobs' sons lie to him about Joseph's death, the Qur'an indicts the soul (Sūrat Yūsuf: 17-18). Fourthly, the Commanding Soul causes Sāmirī and the Israelites to worship idols (Sūrat Ṭaha: 95-96); and the verse that perhaps depicts the Commanding Soul's evil most vividly is Sūrat al-Mā'idah: 30, which says:

> The (selfish) soul of the other led him to the murder of his brother (فطوّعت له نفسه قتل أخيه): he murdered him and became (himself) one of the lost ones.

Therefore, the Qur'an incriminates man's soul for humanity's first murder.

Ghazālī confirms the soul's three modes—Tranquil, Blaming, and Commanding—that the Qur'an mentions. Ghazālī further denotes man's heart as *the* loci for man's spirit, soul, and intellect. He teaches that if humans neglect taming "lust" and "anger", then man's "kingdom", or life, self-destructs. Rāzī boasts that Allah intentionally makes man good and evil so that unlike the angels, plants, or animals, humans may *yearn* for truth. Moreover, Rāzī classifies man's soul as designating man's "reprehensible innate dispositions" and acknowledges that the Commanding Soul's evil desire (هوى) seeks to destroy him. Similar to Ghazālī, Ibn Qayyim's teaching about the soul affirms its three modes mentioned in the Qur'an. Particularly regarding the Commanding Soul, Ibn Qayyim identifies Satan as its consort (قرينها). The Commanding Soul inputs evil images into man's intellect, and Satan, then, exploits them. Therefore, the Commanding Soul's essence makes human nature innately evil.

Chapter 4: "Contesting Mohamed's Positive View"

One of the leading modern-day scholars representing the nature of man in Islam is Mohamed Mohamed. Toward the end of the twentieth century Mohamed writes a book claiming to represent universal Islam's view regarding *fiṭrah* and human nature. Mohamed dedicates this entire book, *Fitrah: The Islamic Concept of Human Nature*, to proving what he names the Positive View. Overall, the Positive View restates Ibn Taymiyyah's teachings on Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 and the Core *ḥadīth*. Meaning, Mohamed argues unequivocally that human nature is solely good due to *fiṭrah*, which also actively prompts man to love and obey Allah. The writer finds two weaknesses in Mohamed's argumentation, however. First of all, Mohamed's approach to defining man's nature emphasizes man's teleological good. Second of all, Mohamed de-emphasizes the Commanding Soul's ontological evil.

Mohamed's definition of *fiṭrah* is highly teleological; or in other words, he perceives its essence merely from a standpoint relating to man's divine purpose on earth. The four qur'anic passages Mohamed uses to warrant the Positive View of *fiṭrah* are the Core *ḥadīth*, Sūrat al-Rūm: 30, Sūrat al-A'rāf: 172, and Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72. In these four passages' contexts, Mohamed links *fiṭrah's* meaning directly to Islam, the Islamic faith, *tawḥīd*, or to man's vicegerent role on earth; and with the exception of Sūrat al-Aḥzāb: 72, Mohamed's argumentation for the Positive View reflects the classical scholars' definitions of *fiṭrah* from Chapter 2. In addition, Mohamed's teleological emphasis also represents modern Islam with scholars such as Attas, Rahman, and Ezzati. These three contemporary Muslim scholars not only mirror Mohamed's approach to defining *fiṭrah* by citing some or all of the above four Islamic passages, but they also expose their

teleological methodology by separating man's "essential nature" from his "blameworthy nature". The former distinguished by *fiṭrah*, while the latter as the result of man's innate evil.

Even though Mohamed does well to admit the Commanding Soul's existence in his book, in reality he actually minimizes its evil presence in man by de-emphasizing its ontological evil. Mohamed accomplishes this by first neglecting to quote or even overtly cite the Commanding Soul's chief verse: Sūrat Yūsuf: 53. It is not surprising, then, that Mohamed further fails to mention and exposit the Commanding Soul's five examples. Strangely, though, in the one instance Mohamed references a source depicting the Commanding Soul, he cites a *secondary* source referring to the Ṣūfī Tustarī's four-part Commanding Soul definition which complements the writer's Chapter 3 findings.

Furthermore, Mohamed de-emphasizes the Commanding Soul's ontological evil by repeatedly blaming evil external factors for man's sinful behavior. Mohamed establishes this particular argument upon the Core *ḥadīth*, but nonetheless, his very own terminology discredits his claim. For example, on one occasion Mohamed writes that the Commanding Soul's evil keeps man in "bondage".

Mohamed also attributes Satan's schemings as the stimulus behind man's evil deeds. However, to warrant his reasoning Mohamed again cites a *secondary* source referencing Ghazālī's "self-dynamic" originally located in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*. By not citing Ghazālī directly, it is possible that this explains the reason why Mohamed miscontstrues Ghazālī for blaming Satan for instigating the entirety of man's evil deeds. In actuality, though, Ghazālī is using symbolic language for the soul's "satanic" personality. Therefore, for the above reasons, Mohamed's support of the Positive View

is unconvincing. In fact, many of Mohamed's arguments contradict the Positive View, and thus, prove that the true Islamic nature of man is dual: innately good (*fiṭrah*) and evil (Commanding Soul).

Chapter 5: "Building a Missional Methodology"

The previous chapters' research demands a decisive missiological response. For well over a thousand years Muslim-Christian dialogue consistently stalemates due to Islam's profession that human nature comprises only goodness due to Allah creating mankind upon *fiṭrah* (Sūrat al-Rūm: 30 and Core *ḥadīth*). Many Muslims, because they do not view themselves as sinful, as a result, forgo serious introspection about their need for Christ's redemption. Chapter 3's qur'anic evidence unveiling the Commanding Soul's ontological evil, though, offers Muslims a critical opportunity to reassess Islam's theological stance on human nature. For Christians, though, research supporting man's dual nature in Islam offers fresh data that missiologists can use to alleviate the theological "clash-point" occurring with Muslims regarding the doctrine of inherited sin.

When Christians tell Muslims that they are sinners because of Adam's transgression, and consequently need to be "saved" by Jesus, Islam's adherents take theological offense. According to the qur'anic Adam and Eve narrative (Sūrat al-Baqarah: 36-38), God forgives Adam's disobedience. Adam's human nature, hence, remains pure due to *fiṭrah*. Furthermore, Sūrat al-Najm: 38-42 teaches Muslims that no man "can bear the burden of another". Thus, Muslims are severely prone to theologically "clash" with Christianity's standard Gospel presentation about human nature's sinfulness; and despite missiologists' advice for Christians to share truth with Muslims within their religious framework, the missiological reality on the field proves otherwise.

By building a new missional methodology that applies this dissertation's research about man's dual nature in Islam—i.e. *fiṭrah's* good and the Commanding Soul's evil—innovative biblical principles can aid Christians in communicating to Muslims that man's nature is sinful. The writer accomplishes this by following Hiebert's three-step missiological process—phenomenology, ontology, and missiology. Phenomenology addresses a people's "human context", which in this case, the dissertation's dual nature findings satisfy. Ensuring that the Scriptures pilot this new missional methodology, the writer conducts ontology by drawing from systematic theology so as to glean essential truths from the Bible concerning human nature. From Hiebert's second step the writer discovers that systematic theologians describe human nature as: 1) noble due to God's image, 2) a single entity depicted by many biblical terms (soul, flesh, mind, spirit, bowels, and heart), 3) intrinsically sinful, and 4) deemed guilty by God due to Adam's sin.

Synthesizing phenomenology's evidence that man's nature is dual in Islam with ontology's four universal truths from systematic theology, the writer finally engages in Hiebert's last step, missiology. Applying these three missiological steps produces six biblical principles that help Christians better contextualize their Gospel message with Muslims about mankind's sinful nature. These biblical principles advise Christians to: 1) avoid scriptures with Muslims that imply inherited sin: stop fighting the same old battles, 2) emphasize with Muslims the fall's evil effects: the entire biblical narrative after the fall illustrates man's bent towards evil, 3) emphasize with Muslims sin's internal essence: choose scriptures highlighting that outward deeds proceed from inside of man, 4) emphasize with Muslims man's internal struggle: stress that the Law is weak in the flesh,

5) emphasize with Muslims God's diagnosis to the sinful human condition—speak of the new nature God gives man through the New Covenant, and 6) emphasize with Muslims man's noble purpose on earth: God creates man to responsibly rule over creation and to know him through Jesus Christ.

This dissertation demonstrates that man's nature in Islam is not solely good due to *fiṭrah*, but that because of the Commanding Soul's presence, human essence is also ontologically evil. Building a new missional methodology from this dissertation's research produces six biblical principles which help Christians unmask Muslims' true nature; and so that Islam's adherents may better grasp their need for Jesus' redemption.

Prospects for Further Study

While researching topics for this dissertation relating to man's nature in Islam, the writer identifies two distinct theological issues that he further intends to study within Islamic Studies. Both subjects manifest themselves most tangibly in Chapter 3, "The Nature of *Nafs*". First of all, even though the writer's research reveals the qur'anic truth that innate evil presides in man's nature through the Commanding Soul, Islam's texts and commentators heavily stress the major role Satan occupies in human beings' lives. Often Ghazālī, Rāzī, and Ibn Qayyim's (and other Muslim authors the writer researches) language suggests that the Commanding Soul and Satan are synonymous entities. In fact, most Muslims perceive Satan, rather than the Commanding Soul, as their main enemy (Sūrat al-Ḥijr: 34-39). Therefore, the writer endeavors to continue his personal study about Islam's teachings—classical and modern—concerning Satan. Accomplishing this provides another opportunity to build a missiological plan that helps Christians share the Gospel within Muslims' heavily entrenched sense of satanic opposition.

Secondly, studying matters about man's *nafs* causes the writer to recognize that Muslim scholars are more certain about the *nafs'* personality in comparison to the روح's (the "spirit's"). In addition, the Qur'an mentions Allah talking about "my Spirit" (روحي; Sūrat Ṣād: 72) and the "Holy Spirit" (روح القدس; Sūrat al-Naḥl: 102). The prophet Muḥammad further speaks (Sūrat al-Isrā': 85) about "The Spirit . . . by command of my Lord (الروح من أمر ربّي)" whereby Allah deliberately withholds knowledge thereof from man. Rāzī and Ibn Qayyim's works about the نفس and روح explicitly reveal that palpable ambiguity prevails within the area of Islamic pneumatology. Therefore, because the روح and روح القدس are prevalent unknowns in the Islam, the writer desires to offer yet another missional methodology which helps Christians communicate with Muslims about the person of the Holy Spirit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

'Abd al-'Āṭī, Ḥammūdah. *Islam in Focus*, Edited by Shaykh Salif Al-Husayin and Mustapha Abu Sway. rev. ed. Beltsville, MD: Amana, 1998.

Accad, Fouad Elias. *Building Bridges: Christianity and Islam*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1997.

Al-Ash'ari, Abu al-Hasan. *Maqalat Al-Islamiyyin Wa Ikhtilaf Al-Musallin (* كتاب المقالات الاسلاميين واختلاف المصلين*)*, ٢ vols., Edited by Muhammad Muhya Al-Din 'Abd Al-Hamid. 1st ed. Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat al-Nahdah al-Misriyyah, 1950.

_____. *Kitaab Al-Lam' Fi Al-Radd 'Ala Ahl Al-Zeegh Wa Al-Bida'*, Edited by Hamuuda Gharaaba. London: Matba'at Misr Sharikat Hamrat Misr, 1955.

Al-Attas, Muhammad Naguib. *Islam and Secularism*. Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1978.

Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib. *The Nature of Man and the Psychology of the Human Soul*. 2nd ed. Malaysia: ISTAC, 1993.

Al-Bukhari, Muhammad Isma'il. *Sahih Al-Bukhari*. Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Bayt al-Afkar al-Dawliyyah, 1998.

Al-Farabi, Abu Nasr Muhammad Bin Muhammad. *Alfarabi Risalat Fi-L-'Aql (* الفارابي رسالة في العقل*)*, Edited by S.J. Maurice Bouyges. Beyrouth: Imprimerie Catholique, 1938.

_____. *Al-Farabi's Book of Letters (*كتاب الحروف*): Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Edited by Muhsin Mahdi. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Mashreq Publishers, 1969.

al-Faruqi, Ismail Raji. *Islam and Other Faiths*, Edited by Ataullah Siddiqui. United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 1998.

Al-Faruqi, Isma'il Raji. *Islam and Other Faiths*, Edited by Ataullah Siddiqui. United Kingdom: The Islamic Foundation, 1998.

Al-Ghazali, Abu Hamid Muhammad. *The Book of Knowledge, Being a Translation with Notes of the Kitab Al-'ilm of Al-Ghazali's Ihya 'Ulum Al-Din*. Translated by Nabih Amin Faris. Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1962.

_____. *Mihakk Al-Nathar Fi Al-Mantiq*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Nahdah al-Hadithah, 1966.

_____. *Al-Ghazali: Deliverance from Error*. Translated by R.J. McCarthy. Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1980.

_____. *Ihya' 'Ulum Al-Din*. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2005.

_____. *Al-Ghazzali on Knowing Yourself and God*, Edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Translated by Muhammad Nur Abdus Salam. 14th ed. Chicago, IL: Great Books of the Islamic World, Inc., 2010.

Al-Iṣfahānī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad Rāghib *Al-Mufradat Fi Gharib Al-Qur'an (*المفردات في غريب القرآن*)*. ٢ vols. Al-Qahirah: Maktabat al-Anjlu al-Miṣriyyah, 1970.

Al-Mahalli, Jalal Al-Din Bin, and Jalal Al-Din Bin Bakr Al-Suyuti. *Al-Qur'an Al-Karim Wa Bi-Hamish Tafsir Al-Jalalayn*. 1st ed. Syria-Lebanon: Dar al-Fajr al-Islami, 2002.

Al-Qurṭubī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad. *Al-Jami' Li-Ahkam Al-Qur'an*, 20 vols. 5th ed. Bayrut, Lubnan: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1996.

Al-Razi, Fakhr Al-Din. *Kitab Al-Nafs Wa Al-Ruh Wa Sharh Quwaha (*كتاب النفس والروح وشرح قواها*)*, Edited by Muhammad Hasan Al-Ma'sumi. Islamabad, Pakistan: Islamic Research Institute, 1968.

_____. *Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir Aw Al-Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 17 vols. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2000.

Al-Ṭabarī, Abī Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr *Jami' Al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Ay Al-Qur'an (*جامع البيان عن تأويل اي القرآن*)*. ٣٠ vols. Cairo: Matba'at Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa awladahu, 1954.

_____. *Tafsir Al-Tabari: Jami' Al-Bayan 'an Ta'wil Ay Al-Qur'an*, 16 vols., Edited by Mahmud Muhammad Shakir. Egypt: Dar Al-Ma'arif bi Misr, 1958.

Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an*. 11th ed. Beltsville, MD: Amana Pub., 2008.

Allen, Leslie C. *Ezekiel 20-48*. Vol. 29. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990.

Anyabwile, Thabiti M. *The Gospel for Muslims: An Encouragement to Share Christ with Confidence*. Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2010.

Augustine. *On Grace and Original Sin*. Lexington, KY: Beloved Publishing, 2014.

Bahnasī, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ra'ūf. *Al-Islam Wa-Naz'at Al-Fitrah* (الاسلام ونزعة الفطرة). Ma'a Al-Islam. 2nd ed. Al-Qāhirah: Mu'assasat al-Khalīj al-'Arabī, 1987.

Barth, Karl. *The Doctrine of Reconciliation: Church Dogmatics*, Edited by Geoffrey William Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance. Translated by Geoffrey William Bromiley. 2nd ed. London; New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004.

Beasley-Murray, George R. *John*. Vol. 36. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. 2nd ed. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999.

Bloesch, Donald G. *Essentials of Evangelical Theology*, 2 vols., vol. 1. 1st ed. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1978.

Böwering, Gerhard. *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qur'anic Hermeneutics of the ṢUfī Sahl at-Tustari (D. 283/896)*. Studien Zur Sprache, Geschichte Und Kultur Des Islamischen Orients, vol. n F , Bd 9. Berlin-New York: De Gruyter, 1979.

Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Ismail. *Sahih Al-Bukhari: Being the Tradition of Saying and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions*, 9 vols., Edited by Muhammad Matraji. Translated by F. Amira Zrein Matraji. 1st ed. New Delhi: Islamic Book Service, 1995.

Cairns, D. S. *A System of Christian Doctrine*. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1979.

Calvin, John. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol. 1, Edited by Henry Beveridge. Lexington, KY: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2011.

Carré, Olivier. *Mysticism and Politics: A Critical Reading of Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an by Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966)*. Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East and Asia., vol. 85. Translated by Carol Artigues. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003.

Chapman, Colin. *"Rethinking the Gospel for Muslims," in Muslims & Christians on the Emmaus Road*. Crucial Issues in Witness among Muslims, Edited by John Dudley Woodbery. Monrovia, CA: MARC Publications, 1989.

Collins, Owen. ed. *The Definitive Bible Commentary*. London: Harper Collins, 1999.

Conyers, A. J. *A Basic Christian Theology*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995.

Coşkun, Selçuk. "On the Use of 'Fitrah ' as a Measure in Determining Whether a Narrated Hadīth Belongs to the Prophet Muhammad." *Journal of Hadith Studies* 6, no. 1 (2008): 29-46.

Craigie, Peter C. *Psalms 1-50*. Vol. 19. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983.

Craigie, Peter C., Page H. Kelley, and Joel F. Jr. Drinkard. *Jeremiah 1-25*. Vol. 26. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1991.

Darwīsh, Yāsir. *Al-Hadith Al-Nabawi Fī Al-Mu'jam Al-'arabi (الحديث النبوي في المعجم العربي): Min Bidayat Al-Qarn Al-Khamis Ila Nihayat Al-Qarn Al-Tasi' Al-Hijriyayn*. 1st ed. Egypt: Dar al-'Asr al-Jadid, 2013.

Dunn, James D. G. *Romans 1-8*. Vol. 38. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1988.

Durham, John I. *Exodus*. Vol. 3. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987.

Engel, James F., and Hugo Wilbert Norton. *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?: A Communication Strategy for the Church and World Evangelization*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishins House, 1975.

Esposito, John L. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, 6 vols., vol. 2. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Exell, Joseph S. *Exodus*. The Preacher's Holiletic Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974. Reprint, 2nd.

Exell, Joseph S., and Thomas H. Leale. *Genesis*. The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974. Reprint, 2nd.

Ezzati, A. *Islam and Natural Law*. London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies Press, 2002.

Fakhry, Majid. *A History of Islamic Philosophy*. 3rd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Fāri', 'Abd al-Ghanī Ḥaydar. *Manhaj Himayat Al-'aqidah Al-Islamiyah Fi Daw' Al-Qur'an Wa-Al-Sunnah Wa-Al-Ittijahat Al-Fikriyah Al-Mu'asirah*. 1st ed. Ṣan'ā': Maktabat Markaz al-Ṣādiq, 2007.

Fayyūmī, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad. *Al-Misbah Al-Munir Fi Gharib Al-Sharh Al-Kabir Lil-Rafi'i (المصباح المنير في غريب الشرح الكبير للرافعي)*, ٢ vols., Edited by 'Abd al-Karīm ibn Muḥammad Rafi'i. Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1978.

Frame, John M. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2013.

Garrett, James Leo. *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*. Vol. 2. 2nd ed. North Richland Hills, TX: BIBAL Press, 2000.

Gobillot, Geneviève. *La Conception Originelle Ses Interpretations Et Fonctions Chez Les Penseurs Musulmans: La Fitra*. Le Caire, France: Institut Francais D'Archeologie Orientale, 2000.

Goldziher, Ignaz, and Bernard Lewis. *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*. Modern Classics in near Eastern Studies. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Griffel, Frank. *Shari'a: Islamic Law in the Contemporary Context*. Edited by Abbas Amanat and Frank Griffel. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007.

_____. "Al-Ghazālī's Use of "Original Human Disposition" (Fiṭra) and Its Background in the Teachings of Al-Fārābī and Avicenna." *The Muslim World* 102, no. 1 (2012): 1-32.

Grudem, Wayne A. *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, Edited by Jeff Purswell. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.

Hazm, Ibn. *Al-Fisal Fi Al-Milal Wa Al-Ahwa' Wa Al-Nihil (الفصل في الملل والاهواء والنحل)*, Edited by 'Abd al-Rahh Al-Jalifah. Azhar, Egypt: Maktabat Muhammad 'Ali Sabih, 1957.

Hesselgrave, David J. *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally: An Introduction to Missionary Communication*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1991.

Hiebert, Paul G. *The Gospel in Human Contexts: Anthropological Explorations for Contemporary Missions*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009.

Holtzman, Livnat. *"Human Choice, Divine Guidance and the Fitra Tradition: The Use of Hadith in Theological Treatises by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya," in*

Ibn Taymiyya and His Times, Edited by Shahab Ahmed and Yossef Rapoport. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Ibn Ahmad, 'Abd Al-Jabbar. *Sharh Al-Asul Al-Khamsah (شرح الاصول الخمسة)*, Edited by 'Abd Al-Karim 'Uthman. 3rd ed. Cairo, Egypt: Maktabat Wahibah, 1996.

Ibn al-Athīr, Majd al-Dīn al-Mubārak ibn Muḥammad. *Al-Nihayah Fi Gharib Al-Hadith Wa-Al-Athar*. Saudi Arabia: Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, 2000.

Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, Aḥmad ibn 'Alī, and Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl Bukhārī. *Fath Al-Bari Bi-Sharh SahīH Al-Bukhari (فتح الباري بشرح صحيح البخاري)*, ١٣ vols., Edited by Taqi Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib. Dar al-Riyan lil-Turath, 1986.

Ibn Kathīr, Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar. *Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-'Azim*, 7 vols. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Andalus, 1966.

Ibn Manẓūr, Muḥammad ibn Mukarram. *Lisan Al-'arab*, 6 vols. Al-Qahirah, Egypt: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1981.

Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah, Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr. *Al-Ruh Fi Kalam 'Ala Arwah Al-Amwat Wa Al-Ahya' Bi-Al-Dala'il (الروح في كلام على ارواح الاموات والاحياء بالدلائل)*. Vol. 3rd. Al-Azhar, Misr: Maktabat Muhammad 'ali Sibi' wa Awladihi, 1967.

_____. *Shifa' Al-'alil Fī Masa'il Al-Qada' Wa-Al-Qadar Wa-Al-Hikmah Wa-Al-Ta'lil (شفاء العليل في مسائل القضاء والقدر والحكمة والتعليل)*, Edited by al-Hassani Hasan 'Abd Allah. Egypt: Dar al-Turath, 1975.

Ibn Sina, Abu 'Ali. *Kitab Al-Najat: Fi Al-Hikmah Al-Mantiqiyyah Wa Al-Tabi'iyyah Wa Al-Ilahiyyah (كتاب النجاة: في الحكمة المنطقية والطبعية والالهية)*, Edited by Majid Fakhrī. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Afaq al-Jadidah, 1985.

Ibn Taymiyah, Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim. *Dara' Ta'arud Al-'Aql Wa Al-Naql (درء تعارض العقل والنقل)*, ١١ vols., Edited by Muhammad Rashaad Salim. 2 ed. Saudi Arabia: Hajar, 1991.

_____. *Tazkiyat Al-Nafs (تزكية النفس)*, Edited by Muhammad bin Sa'id Salim Al-Qahtani. 1st ed. Riyad, Saudi Arabia: Dar al-Muslim, 1994.

Ibn Thābit, Abu Ḥanīfah al-Na'mān. *Kitab Al-Fiqh Al-Akbar (كتاب الفقه الاكبر)*, Edited by Al-Hamam Nasir. Egypt: Dar al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah al-Kubra, 1937.

Ibrahim, I. A. *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam*. 2nd ed. Houston, TX: Darussalam, 1997.

'Ināyat, Ḥamīd. *Modern Islamic Political Thought*. Modern Middle East Series. 1st ed. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982.

Jellie, W. Harvey. *Jeremiah*. The Preacher's Holmiletic Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974. Reprint, 2nd.

Jurjānī, 'Alī ibn Muḥammad. *Al-Ta'rifat*, Edited by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥakīm Qāḍī. 1st ed. Al-Qahirah-Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Misri; Dār al-Kitab al-Lubnani, 1991.

Kateregga, Badru D., and David W. Shenk. *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue*. Updated ed. Harrisonburg, VA.: Herald Press, 2011.

Kazim, Hikmat Fayyad Husayn. *Al-Fitrah Fi Al-Islam (الفطرة في الاسلام)*. Beirut, Lebanon: Daar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2008.

Kraft, Charles H. *Communicating Jesus' Way*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1999.

Luther, Martin. *Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will: A New Translation of De Servo Arbitrio (1525) Martin Luther's Reply to Erasmus of Rotterdam*. Translated by J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston. London: J. Clarke, 1957.

Macdonald, Duncan Black. "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam: Part I." *The Moslem World* v22, no. 1 (1932): 25-42.

_____. "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam: Part Ii." *The Moslem World* v22, no. 2 (1932): 153-68.

Martin, Ralph P. *James*. Vol. 48. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988.

McDowell, Bruce A., and Anees Zaka. *Muslims and Christians at the Table: Promoting Biblical Understanding among North American Muslims*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Pub., 1999.

Miller, Roland E. *Muslims and the Gospel: Bridging the Gap: A Reflection on Christian Sharing*. Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press, 2005.

Mohamed, Yasien. *Fitrah: The Islamic Concept of Human Nature*. London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1996.

Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. England; Grand Rapids, MI: Wiliam B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992.

Moucarry, Chawkat. *The Search for Forgiveness: Pardon and Punishment in Islam and Christianity*. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004.

Murphy, Roland E. *Proverbs*. Vol. 22. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by Bruce A. Metzger, David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998.

Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, al-Qushayrī, and Nawawī. *Sharh Al-Nawawi 'Ala Muslim (* شرح النووي على مسلم), ٦ vols. Cairo: Dar Al-Khayr, 1996.

Muslim, Ibn Hajj al-Qushayr. *Sahih Muslim: Being Traditions of the Sayings and Doings of the Prophet Muhammad as Narrated by His Companions and Compiled under the Title Al-Jami-Us-Sahih*. Translated by 'Abdul Hameed Siddiqi. Lahore, Pakistan: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 2001.

Netland, Harold A. *Dissonant Voices: Religious Pluralism and the Question of Truth*. Grand Rapids, MI.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991.

Nicholls, Bruce J. *Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture*. 2nd ed. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2003.

Nida, Eugene Albert. *Customs and Cultures: Anthropology for Christian Missions*. 1st ed. New York, NY: Harper, 1954.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991.

Parshall, Phil. *New Paths in Muslim Evangelism: Evangelical Approaches to Contextualization*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980.

Penrice, John. *A Dictionary and Glossary of the Koran*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004.

Peters, Ted. *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994.

Picken, Gavin. "Tazkiyat Al-Nafs: The Qur'anic Paradigm." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 101-127.

Qutb, Sayyid. *Al-Mustaqbal Li-Hadha Al-Din (*المستقبل لهذا الدين*)*. Kuwait: I. I. F. S. O., 1970.

_____. *Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an*, 4 vols. 32nd ed. Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Shuruq, 2003.

_____. *Milestones*. Reprint ed. New Delhi, India: Islamic Book Service (P) Ltd., 2014.

Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad. *Kitab Al-Dhari'ah Ila Makarim Al-Shari'ah (*كتاب الذريعة الى مكارم الشريعة*)*, Edited by Abu Zayd Al-'Ajami. Cairo, Egypt: Dar al-Salam, 2007.

Rahman, Fazlur. *Major Themes of the Qur'an*. 2nd ed. Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Rāzī, Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr. *Mukhtar Al-Sihah*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Adab, 1998.

Rhodes, Ron. *Reasoning from the Scriptures with the Muslims*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2002.

Saal, William J. *Reaching Muslims for Christ*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1993.

Shahrastānī, Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm. *Al-Milal Wa Al-Nihal*, Edited by Ahmad Fahmi Muhammad. 2nd ed. Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1992.

Sharī'atī, 'Alī. *On the Sociology of Islam: Lectures*. Translated by Hamid Algar. Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1979.

Shumack, Richard. *The Wisdom of Islam and the Foolishness of Christianity*. Sydney, Australia: Island View Publishing, 2014.

Smith, David L. *With Willful Intent: A Theology of Sin*. Wheaton, IL: BridgePoint, 1994.

Tuck, Robert. *On the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle: James*. The Preacher's Homiletic Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974.

Tustarī, Sahl ibn 'Abd Allāh. *Tafsir Al-Tustari*. Great Commentaries on the Holy Qur'an,, vol. 4. Translated by Annabel Keeler and Ali Keeler. Louisville; Jordan: Fons Vitae & Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2011.

Vine, W. E. *The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine*. Vol. 1. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996.

Wehr, Hans, and J. Milton Cowan. *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*. 3d [rev.] ed. Ithaca, NY: Spoken Language Services, 1971.

Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1-15*. Vol. 1. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987.

_____. *Genesis 16-50*. Vol. 2. Word Biblical Commentary, Edited by David Allan Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1994.

Woodberry, John Dudley. *"Different Diagnoses of the Human Condition," in Muslims & Christians on the Emmaus Road*. Crucial Issues in Witness among Muslims, Edited by John Dudley Woodbery. Monrovia, CA: MARC Publications, 1989.

Yarnold, Edward. *The Theology of Original Sin*. Notre Dame, IN: Fides Publishers, 1971.

Zakariyya, Ahmad Bin Faris Bin. *Mu'jam Maqayis Al-Lughah (معجم مقاييس اللغة)*. Vol. 4, 6 vols. Egypt: Matba'at Mustaf al-Babi al-Halabi, 1971.